DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 467 430 TM 034 316

TITLE	Public Accountability for Student Success: Standards for Education Accountability Systems.
INSTITUTION	National Association of State Boards of Education, Alexandria, VA.
PUB DATE	1998-10-00
NOTE	59p.; The Report of the NASBE Study Group on Education Accountability.
AVAILABLE FROM	NASBE, 1012 Cameron Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 ($12 plus $2 shipping and handling). Tel: 800-220-5183 (Toll Free). For full text: http://www.nasbe.org/Educational_Issues/Reports/PASS_Rpt.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; *Academic Standards; *Accountability; Elementary Secondary Education

ABSTRACT

This document presents standards for educational accountability systems developed by the Study Group on Education Accountability of the National Association of State Boards of Education. The framework consists of these standards: (1) legal authorities clearly specify accountability goals and strategies that focus on student academic performance; (2) at each level of the education system, designated authorities are charged with the efficient governance of the accountability system; (3) specific responsibilities for student learning and performance are assigned to designated agents; (4) accountability is based on accurate measures of agent performance as informed by assessments that are administered equitably to all students; (5) those responsible for governing accountability regularly report student and school performance information in useful terms and on a timely basis to school staff, students and their families, state and local policymakers, and the news media; (6) incentives are established that effectively motivate agents to improve student learning, and consequences are predictably applied in response to performance results; (7) agents are provided with sufficient support and assistance to ensure that they have the capacity necessary to help students achieve high performance standards; (8) policymakers work to ensure that education policies, mandated programs, financial resources, and the accountability system are well aligned; (9) the accountability system has wide support; and (10) various established partnerships work together to support districts, schools, and teachers in their efforts to improve student achievement. (Contains 34 references.)(SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 467 430

Public Accountability for Student Success

Standards for Education Accountability Systems

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

B. Welburn

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

TM034316

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NASBE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION

The report of the NASBE Study Group on Education Accountability

Public Accountability for Student Success

Standards for Education Accountability Systems

THE REPORT OF THE NASBE STUDY GROUP ON EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY

October 1998

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

© **Copyright 1998 by the National Association of State Boards of Education.** All rights reserved.

Additional copies of ***Public Accountability for Student Success*** are available for $12.00 each + $2.00 shipping and handling (prepaid) from NASBE at 1012 Cameron Street, Alexandria, VA 22314; (800) 220-5183.

Other NASBE publications that address accountability issues include:

- **The Full Measure: The Report of the NASBE Study Group on Statewide Assessment Systems** is an in-depth look at the state role in student assessment. Beginning with an analysis of the strong link between state standards and assessments, the report also makes recommendations about the key elements of effective assessment systems, including use of multiple testing formats, communicating with the public, including all students in assessments, providing professional development,and evaluating assessment systems. (1997, 44 pp., $12.00)

- **A Motion to Reconsider: Education Governance at a Crossroads.** The result of two years' work by NASBE's Governance Study Group, this report describes the essential "attributes of sound governance" found to be critical to high performance policymaking and leadership at both the local and state levels. It emphasizes the link between perceptions of good education governance and today's serous problem of public alienation from government in general. (1996, 56 pp., $12.00)

- **The Push and Pull of Standards-based Reform: How Does It Affect Local School Districts and Students with Disabilities?** Based on research conducted in eight school districts across four states, this report examines how these districts have responded to state-initiated standards-based reforms, both in terms of general and special education. It particularly focuses on the variability of the responses as they affect students with disabilities, including differences in such areas as how inclusion is defined, grading practices for students with disabilities, graduation requirements, and policies for including students with "low incidence" or "high incidence" disabilities. (1998, 48 pp., $12.00)

Table of Contents

Foreword	4
Executive Summary	6
Accountability and Education Reform	9
Standards for Education Accountability Systems	14
Standard 1: Accountability Goals and Vision	14
Standard 2: Governing Accountability	18
Standard 3: Responsible Agents	21
Standard 4: Collecting Performance Information	25
Standard 5: Analyzing and Reporting Performance Information	29
Standard 6: Incentives and Consequences	34
Standard 7: Building Agent Capacity	41
Standard 8: Policy Alignment	45
Standard 9: Public Understanding and Support	47
Standard 10: Partnerships	49
PASS as Prologue	51
Appendix A: Study Group Presenters	52
Appendix B: Other Notable Reports on Accountability	53
References	54

Foreword

The NASBE Study Group on Education Accountability

Accountability is a hot topic among education policymakers today, largely in response to widely-held public perceptions that educators are not being held responsible for student academic performance. The NASBE Study Group on Education Accountability was established to explore current issues around accountability and produce recommendations for education policymakers. The Study Group was charged with explicitly building on the recent work of:

- The 1997 NASBE Study Group on Statewide Assessment Systems and their report, *The Full Measure*;
- The 1997 NASBE Study Group on Funding Education in the 21st Century and their report, *Financing Study Success: Beyond Equity and Adequacy*; and
- The 1995-96 NASBE Study Group on Education Governance, whose report is *A Motion to Reconsider: Education Governance at a Crossroads*.

The Study Group was comprised of members of state boards of education from fourteen states and Guam, plus a state legislator representing the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), and a local school board member representing the National School Boards Association (NSBA). All these individuals brought with them rich experiences and lessons learned from wrestling with difficult challenges in their respective roles.

In addition, the Study Group was assisted by an Advisory Board consisting of representatives from two corporations involved in educational assessment; a staff person from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI); and a staff person from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), which provides support to the State Education Improvement Partnership, a group of seven national associations, including NASBE, that work with state-level education policymakers.

Supplementing the perspectives of the Study Group, Advisory Board and NASBE staff, the accountability standards were developed from:

- Reviews of effective and ineffective practices provided by education leaders working in states perceived as critical cases;
- Perspectives from local practitioners who are experiencing accountability at the school level;
- Presentations by academic and policy experts; and
- Reviews of research and literature on education accountability.

A list of those who made presentations to the Study Group can be found in Appendix A.

Study Group Members

Ms. Betty Preston, Chair
Missouri State Board of Education

Mr. Charles DeGross
Ohio State Board of Education

Ms. Beverly Greenberg
Connecticut State Board of Education

Mrs. Maud Dahme
New Jersey State Board of Education

Mrs. Margaret Erling
Oklahoma State Board of Education

Mr. Gregory Forristall
Iowa State Board of Education

Dr. Charles Harrison
Superintendent, Pontotoc City Schools
Mississippi State Board of Education

Ms. Pat Hayes
Colorado State Board of Education

Ms. Janet Martin
Arizona State Board of Education

Ms. Marilyn McConachie
Illinois State Board of Education

Mr. James A. McLarty, III
Arkansas State Board of Education

Ms. Gloria Nelson
Guam State Board of Education

Mrs. Marilyn Shields
Utah State Board of Education

Ms. Susan Stitham
Alaska State Board of Education

Ms. Kathy Wilmot
Nebraska State Board of Education

Representing the National Schools Boards Association (NSBA)
Ms. B. Marie Byers
Hagarstown, Maryland, Board of Education

Representing the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)
Hon. Henry Heller
Maryland State House of Representatives

***

Advisory Board Members
Dr. Cynthia Ward
CTB/Graw-Hill

Mr. Gary Hess
Harcourt Brace Educational Management

Ms. Margaret McNeely
US Department of Education

Ms. Anuradha Sapru Kohls
Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)

***

NASBE Staff
Don Dailey
Director of Policy Research

Jim Bogden
Senior Project Associate

Executive Summary

Education accountability is currently a hot topic in state and local education policymaking. Defined as the process by which organizations, communities, or individuals attempt to ensure that schools meet their objectives (Rothman, 1995), new systems focused on student performance are being developed across the nation. Accountability is seen as a means for assuring that all students learn to high standards and for connecting reform policies with what actually occurs in schools and classrooms. Increasingly, the bottom line is student achievement.

States and districts are trying out a wide range of accountability strategies to improve student performance, with varying degrees of success. The Study Group on Education Accountability organized by the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) carefully examined the field to determine what is and is not working, the dilemmas policymakers are facing, and how the components of accountability can fit together into a coherent system. This effort has resulted in a framework of ten action-oriented standards for guiding discussion, design and evaluation of state and local education accountability systems.

The Study Group's framework is titled Public Accountability for Student Success. PASS is a comprehensive blueprint for state and local accountability systems consisting of standards pertaining to the basic elements of an accountability system and standards related to important contextual conditions affecting accountability. The basic philosophy of PASS is to use accountability as a means for *helping* all schools become high achieving organizations.

STANDARD 1: Legal authorities clearly specify accountability goals and strategies that focus on student academic performance.

The central objective of any education accountability system should be continuous improvement of student learning. Accountability systems can be designed to serve several different purposes. It is important to clarify those purposes in terms of coherent, specific goals to be achieved.

STANDARD 2: At each level of the education system, designated authorities are charged with the efficient governance of the accountability system.

In order for an accountability system to operate with certainty and coherence, responsibilities and lines of authority must be clearly articulated for those governing and administering the system. Schools are faced with a multitude of demands from different forces that often leads to competing agendas and uncertainty regarding priorities. Consistent leadership is needed to provide schools with clear direction and coherent boundaries.

STANDARD 3: Specific responsibilities for student learning and performance are assigned to designated agents.

It is important to clarify who is to be primarily held accountable for improving student performance. In formal terms, this is the agent responsible for attaining the goals of the accountability system. Examples of agents include districts, schools and teachers. Each has a potentially significant impact on student performance, but it is important to clarify who will be held responsible for what to ensure certainty of action. Authorizing a responsible primary agent provides a focal point for targeting incentives and allocating resources to build capacity.

STANDARD 4: Accountability is based on accurate measures of agent performance as informed by assessments that are administered equitably to all students.

Accountability must be based on accurate and meaningful measures of performance applied to all students. In order to help schools improve student learning, data should be collected on student progress in achieving performance goals at critical intervals in the students academic career (e.g., 4th, 8th, and 10th grades). Multiple assessments serving different purposes should be employed to capture a complete picture of student performance. Also, school level contextual data should be collected to provide meaningful guidance for improving performance.

STANDARD 5: Those responsible for governing accountability regularly report student and school performance information in useful terms and on a timely basis to school staff, students and their families, state and local policymakers, and the news media.

Student performance on assessments and appropriate contextual factors should be continually reported to policymakers and school communities in meaningful terms. Reports should address both student performance against absolute standards and progress made towards reaching the standards. Student performance data should not only be reported in aggregated school-wide averages, but also for different student groups to draw attention to defined subpopulations whose performance merits particular attention. Data should be used to engage school communities in continuous school improvement efforts.

STANDARD 6: Incentives are established that effectively motivate agents to improve student learning. Consequences, which could include rewards, interventions or sanctions, are predictably applied in response to performance results.

Interventions should be combined with incentives to effectively motivate agents (schools and educators) to attain the goals of the system. A calibrated series of interventions should be able to address problems in schools where performance is repeatedly below standards and not improving. A well-designed system focused on helping schools improve student learning will begin with assistance and capacity building as the first approach to addressing low performance. Sanctions should only be applied as a last resort to schools that continue to decline.

STANDARD 7: Agents are provided sufficient support and assistance to ensure they have the capacity necessary to help students achieve high performance standards.

Schools with high motivation to achieve clearly defined goals can still fall short if they lack the capacity to do so. Strategically designed assistance should be provided that are based on measures of student performance, school processes, and context.

STANDARD 8: Policymakers work to ensure that education policies, mandated programs, financial resources, and the accountability system are well aligned so that consistent messages are communicated about educational goals and priorities.

Coherence across major education policies is critical to the success of the education system. Student standards, assessments, teacher licensure policies, professional preservice preparation and professional development programs, public school choice policies, and higher education admissions standards should all be aligned to send consistent signals of what is expected of schools and teachers.

STANDARD 9: The accountability system has widespread support.

An accountability system must have widespread support to stay the course in achieving its goals. States and districts must seek to engage the public in designing and executing the system on an ongoing basis. A grass roots approach to building the system and making important decisions throughout its operation will enhance public undertaking of how it works and generate greater buy-in.

STANDARD 10: Various established partnerships work together to support districts, schools and teachers in their efforts to improve student achievement.

The public K-12 education community should be actively engaged in partnerships with parents, the business community, higher education, social service agencies, health organizations, and other important local institutions to ensure all students can achieve to high standards. Partnerships serve as a resource for support, new ideas, and feedback on what knowledge and skills students need. An accountability system is strengthened when a range of standing partnerships work together to support districts, schools and teachers in their efforts to improve student learning and development.

PASS as a Tool for Learning Communities

Almost every aspect of an accountability system is characterized by challenging dilemmas and competing perspectives. A framework of standards can exist as a focal point for engaging these multiple perspectives in focused discussion. PASS is designed to capture current thinking about education accountability, with special emphasis on promising and best practices. The ultimate purpose of PASS is to serve as a tool for policymakers and practitioners to use in building accountable learning communities at state and local levels.

Accountability and Education Reform

Today's heightened concern about education accountability is not new. Time and again, accountability has gained prominent status in American thought and education policymaking. Throughout this century accountability has been widely implemented in different forms, including management and fiscal accountability, control over teacher quality and other programmatic concerns, ensuring compliance with civil rights procedures, and securing financial equity across districts and schools. What *is* new in the 1990's are demands for accountability more tightly focused than ever before on the core mission of education: student achievement.

The NASBE Study Group carefully examined the field of education accountability to determine what is and is not working, wrestled with dilemmas policymakers are facing, and debated how different elements of accountability could fit together into a coherent system. This effort has resulted in a framework of ten action-oriented standards for discussing, designing and evaluating state and local education accountability systems. The framework is called Public Accountability for Student Success (PASS).

Since the early 1980s the United States has engaged in a remarkably sustained period of education reform. Nationwide, the movement is toward "standards-based reform" in which authorities set specific standards for the academic content and skills students must master. Schools are being given more autonomy to design their own educational programs, but are also held responsible for how well their students are reaching the standards. An increasing number of state and local education decisionmakers have become convinced that accountability ought to focus on what the education system produces, that is, on how well students are learning expected knowledge and developing desirable skills.

The NASBE Study Group on Education Accountability affirms this new-found emphasis on student learning as the most worthy of goals for public education. That is, improving student learning *must* be the central purpose of any state or local accountability system.

Why Standards for Accountability?

Currently, at least 43 states are developing new accountability systems that focus on monitoring or improving student performance (Elmore *et al.*, 1996). Among the many challenging issues they are wrestling with are:

- Should and at what point should a state step in and take over the operation of districts and/or schools that are underperforming? How then does the state extricate itself from the situation?
- How can an accountability system encourage best practices, such as improving a school's climate for learning?
- Can and should accountability be tied to school funding?
- How can state departments of education with reduced staff monitor student performance and take appropriate action?
- To what extent should non-school factors such as poverty status be taken into account in a fair yet firm accountability system?

Despite the attention and activity now surrounding education accountability, there has not existed a coherent framework of standards to guide policymakers in designing new systems. One result of this void is great variability in the types and quality of the accountability systems being developed and implemented.

For example, systems are being established that have internal contradictions. States are establishing standards for student performance, yet also mandating particular processes or techniques which may not work in all schools. Many schools are not granted sufficient autonomy to exercise critical judgment on how to improve student performance.

Other systems operate without clearly defined goals, insufficient authority to promote goal attainment, or poorly specified lines of responsibility (Adams & Kirst, 1998). In some cases it is difficult to determine whether or not the system is designed simply to monitor student performance or actually to use data to improve student performance. In other situations an agency may be given responsibility for measuring and reporting on performance, but insufficient authority to act on its findings, perhaps out of deference to strong traditions of local control. Sometimes exactly who is responsible for student performance is not very well defined. Each of these situations create conditions for confusion, lack of certainty, and lack of direction.

A host of political and school-level contextual conditions can also undermine well constructed accountability processes if these issues are not addressed during policy design and implementation (Kirst & Mazzeo, 1996). Various groups in a state or school community may have different expectations and goals for student learning. States and communities can experience difficulty in staying the course with an accountability system that is not well understood and supported by the public.

Much has been learned about education accountability over the past five to ten years (other major reports on education accountability are listed in Appendix B). Drawing on this knowledge, PASS represents a coherent framework of action-oriented standards that can:

- Serve as a guide for designing new accountability systems;
- Act as a tool for evaluating and redesigning existing accountability systems;
- Provide a template for organizing discussion and learning among policymakers, professional educators, and citizens; and
- Explain how the various components of an accountability system work together as an integrated system instead of as a collection of unconnected policy issues.

PASS standards can help answer the question, "Is anyone holding the accountability system accountable?"

Foundations of PASS

Any accountability system ought to foster the continuous improvement of educational practices and other factors that affect student achievement. It should not simply be for the purpose of saying "*Gotcha!*" A truly effective system of accountability involves monitoring, but more importantly is about creating appropriate incentives and building capacity in schools where needed to improve student learning. In this way accountability can serve to assist schools become more effective at helping students learn. Strategically targeted supports and assistance are eminently more useful than mandates and punitive actions.

Four overarching values cutting across all elements in PASS include:

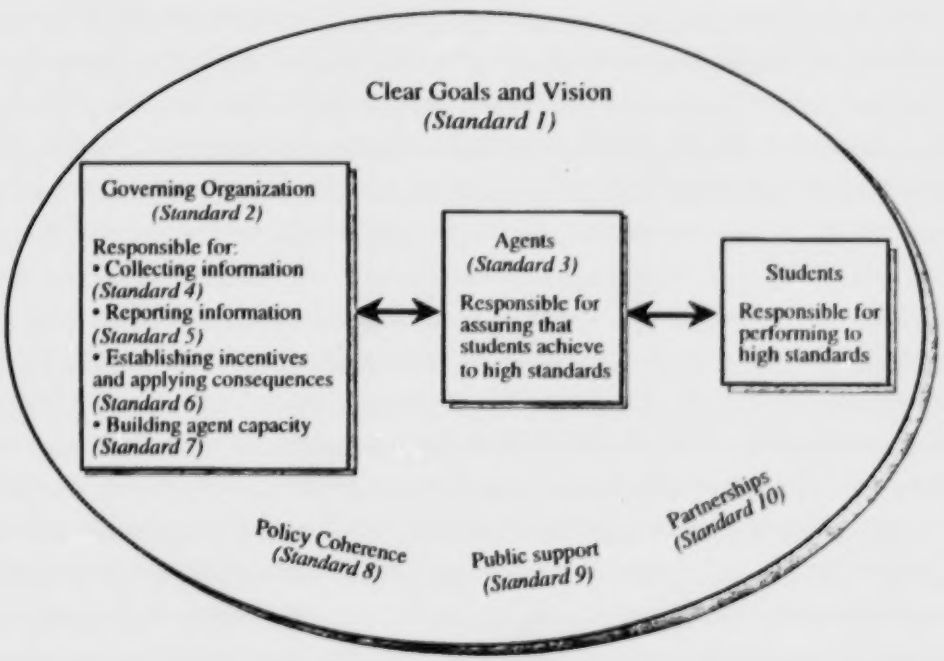
1) Accountability should operate as a helping process focused on strategically targeted assistance;
2) All elements and activities of an accountability system should be useful in helping schools improve student learning on a continuing basis;
3) Elements in the accountability system should be economically feasible; and
4) High standards of fairness and ethics should guide all activities and decisions developed through the accountability system.

The standards do not attempt to impose any one particular set of reform measures, although they are consistent with the general approach of standards-based reform. The standards incorporate lessons learned from experiences and current research into best practice while recognizing the best solutions to educational challenges will necessarily vary from one school to another.

The PASS Standards

Public Accountability for Student Success (PASS) is a complete framework for education accountability concerned with the *processes* of accountability *and* with important *contextual* factors that work in tandem to impact school practices and student performance. The standards specify critical characteristics of an effective accountability system focused on student performance (see Figure 1, below, and summary in Table 1, page 12).

Figure 1. Public Accountability for Student Success



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 1: Summary of Standards for Education Accountability Systems

#	*Standard*	*Description*	*Rationale*
1.	**Accountability Goals and Vision**	The goals of the accountability system are clarified in specific terms. Strategies are focused on improving the performance of all students.	Provides clarity, direction, consistency, and a student focus.
2.	**Governing Accountability**	Responsibilities for managing and governing accountability are clearly assigned to designated organizations.	Provides certainty, necessary authority. Data drives action.
3.	**Responsible Agents**	Agents are identified who are primarily responsible for achieving student performance goals.	Provides certainty, causal responsibility.
4.	**Collecting Information**	Accountability is based on accurate and meaningful measures of performance and context.	Assures alignment with standards, linkage with school and classroom context, validity, reliability .
5.	**Analyzing and Reporting Information**	Student performance and contextual factors are continually reported to school communities and other stakeholders on a timely basis.	Data are meaningful and useful. Disaggregated data are reported both in absolute and value added terms.
6.	**Incentives and Consequences**	Incentives, rewards and sanctions are structured to motivate and enhance high performance by agents and students.	Aligns external accountability with internal expectations and goals. Applies consequences.
7.	**Building Agent Capacity**	Data are used to design and provide supports to help all schools achieve student performance goals.	Agent needs capacity to achieve goals.
8.	**Policy Coherence**	Major education policies and laws are aligned.	Assures consistency of policies and incentives.
9.	**Public Support**	The accountability system has widespread support.	Provides authority, responsiveness and sustainability.
10.	**Partnerships**	Education, other government services, and the private sector work together to help agents achieve accountability goals.	Assures alignment of priorities, signals to schools, and use of resources.

The first three standards define *who* is accountable to *whom* for *what*. The framework begins with the clarification of vision and goals for accountability (Standard 1), emphasizing the importance of stating that the central overriding goal of the system is continuous improvement in student learning and achievement.

Next, at each level clearly designated organizations must be given responsibility to continuously govern and manage the system and ensure the vision and goals are being achieved (Standard 2). Appropriate governing organizations might be state or local boards of education, assisted by state or local education department staff who actually administer the system. Whoever is designated to govern, lines of authority must be clear so that everyone involved knows *who* is accountable to *whom* for student achievement.

Standard 3 concerns the "agents" assigned primary responsibility for student learning, who could be school districts, schools or teachers. The relationship between governing organizations and agents is similar to a con-

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

tractual agreement. Once again, too many agents can cause conflicting agendas and confusion and so responsibilities and lines of authority must be clearly spelled out and widely understood.

As agents pursue their mission, governing organizations are responsible for collecting information about student performance and important contextual conditions (Standard 4). Governing organizations should report that information in meaningful and useful terms to key audiences including policymakers, students and their families, teachers, and the general public (Standard 5).

Standard 6 addresses the set of incentives and consequences which motivate agents and students to pursue accountability goals. This involves distribution of rewards, interventions and sanctions as appropriate. Standard 7 focuses attention on helpful interventions and supports provided by the governing organization to enhance the capacity of its agents to achieve the goals of the accountability system. Standard 8 stresses the need for related education policies to be consistent with and supportive of accountability goals and strategies.

The remaining two standards deal with critical contextual conditions that directly impact the attainment of accountability goals. This is the other side of the equation: the human and political side. Standard 9 addresses the need for widespread support from the public, families, the private sector, educators, and other public services to sustain an accountability system. Standard 10 highlights the importance of maintaining standing partnerships that assist agents to achieve student achievement goals. A system of education accountability that does not address these contextual factors is likely to be undermined and fail at key stages.

When this contextual part of the equation is added to the operational processes, an accountability system is essentially complete. *Unfortunately, all too rarely are these multiple factors developed together as an integrated whole.* The Study Group presents these ten standards as an entire set, not as a menu to pick and choose from.

In the following chapters each standard is stated as a single statement, followed by a series of crucial indicators of that standard. The indicators work as details for guiding those involved in designing and evaluating an accountability system. They can be used as a checklist for planning and evaluation purposes and as items for generating focused discussion and debate about accountability.

To Whom Should the Standards Apply?

The NASBE Study Group chose to develop standards that could apply to *any* state or local system, or set of coordinated systems, where the emphasis is on improving education for all students. A number of traditional models for intergovernmental relations divide responsibilities for student performance into clearly separate categories where the state plays one role and local districts another. Yet, the political reality is that federal, state, district, and school systems continually operate in each other's arenas. Responsibilities and powers among levels of education governance in a state are usually determined by political negotiation and long-standing political values regarding state-local relations. Ideally, accountability should operate within a coordinated system where state and local responsibilities are linked together. How this actually develops will likely differ across states.

The standards were primarily designed for traditional public schools. In addition, they can apply to magnet and charter schools, private schools (with some modification), and even newly emerging, Internet-based "cyber-schools." New educational models do not eliminate the need for a well organized accountability system. On the contrary, if states and communities move towards increasingly greater levels of choice among schools, parents and families will need reliable guidance to make informed decisions.

Standards for Education Accountability Systems

Standard 1: Accountability Goals and Vision

Legal authorities clearly specify accountability goals and strategies that focus on student academic performance.

Indicators:

1) The purpose of the accountability system is defined in concrete terms as a program designed to help schools improve student achievement consistent with specified standards for student learning and performance.

2) State and local standards for student achievement are articulated in clear, specific and measurable terms for all students.

3) The accountability system explicitly encompasses *all* students, regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, income, disability status, or English language proficiency.

4) The accountability system is based on a strategy of targeting assistance where it is needed to enhance schools' capacity to teach students to high standards.

Discussion:

The importance of clarifying the goals and strategic vision of the accountability system cannot be emphasized enough. Districts, schools and teachers are frequently under pressure to meet a wide range of accountability requirements from federal, state and local mandates, which sometimes conflict in the demands they place on educators. For example, a primary emphasis on ensuring a certain level of resources, or on administering due process procedures, could impair the strategic capacity of a school to actually improve student performance. Resources, civil rights and academic achievement are each important, yet they need to be fashioned together within a set of consistent and reinforcing goals so as not to work at cross purposes.

Components within a single accountability system can generate conflict. For example, stringent financial safeguards cumulatively adopted in response to past instances of waste, fraud or abuse can, taken together, become a formidable barrier to the timely procurement of specialty resources at the classroom level.

Clear, well defined goals that state expectations for what schools, educators and students need to accomplish:

- Provide a sound basis for measuring success;
- Provide a fair basis for comparing performance;
- Help assure internal consistency across major elements of an accountability system;
- Help to organize and strategically target resources; and
- Serve to enhance the alignment of supportive policies.

Before districts, schools or students can be held accountable for their performance, the expectations for their performance must be widely known and understood. Standards are a useful mechanism for clearly articulating in specific, measurable terms what students are expected to know and be able to do. They can serve as an ambitious point of reference against which all performance is measured.

Student performance goals and accountability strategies must be structured to motivate all districts, schools and students, including those performing at the low, middle and high ends of the spectrum. Goals should both address the absolute attainment of student achievement standards *and* the progress made towards meeting and even surpassing the standards. Focusing on continuous improvement recognizes that schools begin at different levels and face uneven contextual conditions. Goals that require steady progress also prevent high-performing schools from resting on their laurels.

New Jersey: Re-Emphasizing the Primary Mission of Education

The first goal in the 1996 Strategic Plan for Systemic Improvement of Education in New Jersey is to "Define the primary mission of public education as the enhancement of high student academic achievement..." State leaders admitted they had failed to articulate exactly what they expected the schools to accomplish. The strategic plan charges that the public schools' focus had been "diluted" by the desire "to provide all forms of supplementary educational experiences and to address a broad range of social issues." In the future, the State Department of Education is to maintain a steady focus on academic achievement in state policy and local practice.

Strategies That Can Serve as the Design Foundation of Accountability

Measuring Inputs and Resources

Accountability has often focused on measuring inputs to the process of teaching and learning. This refers to the quantity of resources available to districts and schools, such as the number of holdings in the library, the number of certified teachers employed, the square footage allocation per student in a school, or the amount of financial resources expended per student. The underlying purpose of this accountability approach is to ensure that all districts or schools maintain a minimum level of the resources deemed necessary to be efficient and effective. This approach relies on bureaucratic controls to ensure compliance (Adams & Kirst, 1998).

Processes and Behavior

Alternately, accountability can be designed to ensure that *processes* used by districts and schools are consistent with legal requirements and/or best practices. States can mandate and then monitor certain processes associated with effective schools, such as the use of specific curricula and instructional practices; behaviors expected of principals, teachers, students and parents; or the use of formal planning models. Federal programs to enhance civil rights often use monitoring processes to ensure districts and schools are in compliance with legally defined procedures, such as those designed to enhance equal access and due process protections for special populations. Similar to the resource monitoring approach, accountability strategies that measure process compliance also primarily rely on bureaucratic control to ensure compliance. For example, many states have established accreditation systems to review school organization and processes (Roach, Dailey, & Goertz, 1997).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Student Performance

An accountability system can simply focus on end results, that is, assess a school's or district's progress towards achieving specified goals for student performance without regard for the particular learning programs being employed. Within such a system, student performance becomes the focal point for all activity. Content standards for student learning serve to organize curriculum and instruction. Performance standards establish the threshold for measuring progress. Incentives are structured to motivate schools and teachers to positively impact student performance. Resources are deployed to enhance the capacity of schools to help students learn. Within the school, teachers focus their attention on student performance as the overriding goal. Schools are expected to help all students make progress toward student learning goals (Elmore, Abelmann, & Fuhrman, 1996).

Capacity Building

Yet another accountability strategy focuses on strengthening the capacity of schools to improve their performance. School capacity can relate to a number of factors that potentially influence the ability of schools to attain student performance goals: the existence of a schoolwide professional community with high expectations for student learning and professional practice, effective leadership capable of motivating others to achieve at high levels, skilled teachers who are trained in rigorous content, and positive school-family-community relations. Data can be collected to inform state or district policymakers on the strengths and weaknesses of particular districts or schools so that targeted improvement efforts can be designed and implemented. The emphasis is on providing customized support to build capacity for local decision making (Adams & Kirst, 1998).

The Study Group believes the best way to achieve the goal of improving the academic performance of all students is a mix of the latter two strategies described above. This involves monitoring student performance and actively using performance information to continuously improve the capacity of schools.

Kentucky: Valuable Lessons Learned

Since the entire public education system was found unconstitutional in 1989 and rebuilt from the ground up, educators across the nation have been keenly observing Kentucky's thorough-going reform efforts.

Kentucky's accountability program sets two-year goals for each school on state assessments and provides cash bonuses to schools that exceed their goals. Schools meeting their goals are considered "successful"; those that improve but fall short of their goals are "improving"; and those falling below their goals and declining are "in decline." The state assigns to declining schools a "distinguished educator," a principal or teacher selected and trained by the state to help schools improve on state assessments. Of the 53 schools originally assigned distinguished educators, 36 have since improved enough to leave the program and an additional 16 are expected to do so this year. This model of intervention is expensive, but considered extremely worthwhile and productive by all school participants involved. Kentucky is also using information collected about the characteristics of its high performing schools as a guide to its technical assistance (Drummond, 1997).

Since it was originally designed, the accountability system has been periodically revised in response to unanticipated consequences. Addressing the Study Group, Dr. Roger Pankratz of the Kentucky Institute for Education Research shared the following lessons:

- The pressure of school accountability has encouraged many teachers to focus their attention on learning outcomes and to search for more effective instructional strategies.
- Students are writing more, and many teachers and parents report that children are better able to express their ideas in writing. In schools that have implemented reform measures most systematically, students tend to perform the best on both basic skills *and* higher skills.
- Recruiting, training, and supporting school leaders is the single most important issue to address.
- The greatest challenge with crafting an accountability system is not the tests themselves, but determining the systems for classifying school performance and issuing rewards and sanctions.
- It is unfortunately true that "People do what you inspect, not what you expect." High stakes testing and the threat of sanctions are effective incentives for school improvement. Financial rewards are proving to be relatively less effective.
- Test scores should not automatically invoke consequences. Human interpretative judgment needs to factor into decisions about sanctions and interventions.
- Test security has proven to be a critical logistical issue because of the high stakes attached to the results.
- A great many teachers have been found to be poorly prepared to effectively use data about student performance that is provided to them.
- Communicating standards to the public has been very challenging.
- The private, business-based Pritchard Committee has been critical to building broad support for Kentucky's sustained reform efforts.
- Developing accountability policy "is not for the faint-hearted." It is complex and a thick skin is required.

A member of the Kentucky State Board of Education recently stated that, "Teachers are teaching better. Students are learning. I see it every day."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Standard 2: Governing Accountability

At each level of the education system, designated authorities are charged with the efficient governance of the accountability system.

Indicators:

1) Responsibilities and lines of authority are clearly articulated for those governing and managing the accountability system (e.g., state and local boards of education) and those being held responsible for achieving student performance goals (e.g., teachers, schools, districts).

2) Organizations responsible for governance at each level of the education system assure that information on student achievement is efficiently collected, analyzed, and reported to educators, families, policymakers, and the public.

3) With the assistance of administering agencies, governing organizations are responsible for judging the extent to which designated agents are achieving student performance goals, deciding on consequences in response to the agents' performance, and applying those consequences.

4) Governing organizations are responsible for enhancing the capacity of schools and teachers to achieve student achievement goals through various supports and technical assistance.

5) Governing organizations continually evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of all aspects of the accountability system and refine the system accordingly.

Discussion:

The education landscape is filled with numerous organizations operating in federal, state and local arenas that all place increasingly difficult and sometimes conflicting accountability demands on schools and teachers. Some of the these include state and local boards of education, chief state school officers and local superintendents of education, state legislatures, governors, judges and courts, mayors, federal agencies, interest groups, researchers, business and professional associations, and textbook and test publishers, as well as students and their families. Beleaguered school staff are understandably confused as to whom, precisely, they must answer to. The cacophony of demands can be overwhelming and debilitating.

The clarity with which organizations are designated as responsible for governing and managing an accountability system will impact the ability of the system to focus on improving student performance (Adams & Kirst, 1998). Clearly specifying these responsibilities helps to promote internal consistency and greater efficiency.

Effective accountability requires that performance objectives, areas of responsibility, and lines of authority are clearly understood by each agency and individual involved in the education system. It is equally important that the various organizations responsible for making education policy, governing accountability, and managing the system work as a coordinated team. An amalgam of organizations with overlapping responsibilities who communicate conflicting priorities to teachers and schools must be avoided. *Everyone needs to understand **who** is accountable to **whom** for **what**.*

An important responsibility of organizations responsible for governing accountability is to establish a set of balanced policies and incentives that will effectively motivate teachers and schools to meet student achievement goals. Other critical duties are to assess the extent to which student performance goals are being fulfilled, and to widely report those results. Such information needs to be used to plan effective supports and interventions to help schools make a positive difference in student learning. Performance data also serve as the basis for making decisions on appropriate rewards and sanctions.

Characteristics of Ideal Governing Organizations

In order to fulfill their responsibilities for governing education accountability within the context of a democratic society, governing organizations should embody the following characteristics (NASBE Study Group on Education Governance, 1996):

- They are capable of focusing on challenging education issues in depth in order to make informed decisions, adopt coherent policies, and provide continuity in oversight.
- They are democratically based, representing the interests of citizens and accountable to the public, but operating with enough autonomy so that they respond to shifting public demands with sound judgment.
- They are structurally comprised of members who can bring long range perspectives and vision about education into the political process.

Well functioning state and local boards of education fit these criteria. Education boards comprised of lay volunteers who reflect the wishes of the community can provide citizens a central organization through which they can connect to the accountability system. A variety of other models are also possible for operating an accountability system (see box on page 20).

In order to fulfill their responsibilities, governing organizations must develop and assert their capacity to provide responsive and visionary leadership. They must also have ample authority to direct the administration of the accountability system, and be able to mobilize the resources and in-depth expertise schools need to achieve student achievement goals.

Coordinated System

State and local organizations charged with governing education accountability must link together in a smoothly coordinated system. For example, schools could be required to prepare improvement plans that respond directly to statewide test results, while districts in turn prepare district-wide improvement plans. Schools and districts could supplement state-generated performance reports with those of their own that include more detail.

Evaluation

Governing organizations must continually evaluate all aspects of the accountability system itself as to whether the established goals are being met. Inevitably, unintended consequences always emerge and any system needs to be periodically refined. The process of refinement should be deliberate, involve public debate, and be very well justified.

West Virginia: Office of Educational Performance Audits

West Virginia's legislature recently established a new Office of Educational Performance Audits to evaluate school performance. The office is to operate independently of the state department of education, although it is accountable to the state board of education.

Florida: Independent Commission

Florida, whose cabinet of independently elected officials serve as the state board of education, established a separate 23-member appointed Commission on Education Reform and Accountability to guide and oversee the development, establishment, implementation, and maintenance of its accountability system. The Commission functions independently of the department of education and is composed of parents, businesspeople, educators and elected officials. The Lieutenant Governor and Commissioner of Education serve as co-chairs. Among its duties are to annually review and revise the components of the education accountability system.

Nevada: Council on Academic Standards

In 1997 the Nevada Legislature established a nine-member appointed council to establish academic standards, recommend related assessments to the state board of education, and recommend any legislation deemed necessary to implement the standards. The council reports to the Legislative Committee on Education, and in 2001 it will hand off its duties to a new Legislative Bureau of Educational Accountability and Program Evaluation.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Standard 3: Responsible Agents

Specific responsibilities for student learning and performance are assigned to designated agents.

Indicators:

1) Responsibilities for achieving specified goals for student learning and performance are clearly articulated and assigned to particular agents (*e.g.*, teachers, schools, districts).

2) Designated agents have sufficient authority and discretion to organize their resources and programs to improve student learning and performance.

Discussion:

Identifying the appropriate agents who should be held responsible for achieving student performance goals is perhaps the greatest challenge in designing an accountability system. A range of potential agents can be identified from the long list of individuals and groups that actually influence student learning. These include teachers, principals, school councils, local boards of education, district office staff, parents and families, and students themselves. Less directly involved but still influential are institutions of higher education, the private sector, state and local human service providers, and a host of other federal, state and local agencies. *Each individual and group impacting student achievement must accept a degree of shared responsibility.*

However, specific agents need to be identified who can be held *primarily* responsible for student performance. Otherwise, accountability can become overly dispersed and the compelling focus that generates immediate action is lost (Figure 2).

The Study Group believes it is important to identify and authorize designated agents to accept responsibility for specific aspects of student achievement. Agents should be close to the center of the teaching and learning process and be in a position to directly affect student learning and performance. The relationship of an agent to its governing organization operates similar to a contract (Hill, Pierce & Guthrie, 1997).

The School as Primary Agent

A major trend in current education reform is school-based accountability, in which schools are identified as the agent in state and local accountability systems. School staff are at the center of teaching and learning and are thus able to make a difference. Schools also operate at a broad enough level to strategically organize resources to affect all students across all classrooms.

One of the great strengths of designating the school as the primary agent responsible for student learning is that, in the ideal, student achievement becomes collective property across the entire school community. Principals certainly feel the pressure of school-based accountability more than any single individual. Yet, an ideal model for school-based governance goes beyond the school principal and potentially affects all participants in the

school community, including parents and families, students, teachers and other school staff, and other service providers. Table 2 outlines various potential strengths of schools as agents for improving student performance.

Table 2: Potential Strengths of Schools as the Primary Agent for Student Performance

Strength	*Description of Relevant Issues*
Collective responsibility	Student achievement becomes a collective responsibility of the entire school community (students, parents, administrators, teachers, etc.)
Collective capacity	Fosters building school-wide capacity across all teachers. A student's educational experience occurs throughout a school, not one individual classroom.
Role of the principal	Principals play a major role in making a school perform as an effective organization. Schools as agents puts direct accountability pressure on principals.
School variation	Variation among schools in achieving student learning goals can be identified to serve as a strategic basis for providing assistance, rewards and sanctions.
Connecting delivery and accountability	Focuses attention on activity where education is actually delivered. Schools are the lowest common denominator across a given set of classrooms where student learning occurs.
School decision making	Schools may be in the best position to identify how resources can be used to improve learning among their students and which techniques work best for them.

School-based accountability is associated with some complications, as well:

- If schools are held responsible for a school-wide average score of student performance, accountability incentives may discourage using resources or applying effort to help students with special needs. "High performing schools" can have low performing students who are falling through the cracks. School-wide average also mask the performance of individual teachers.

- Schools differ in student populations and deliver programs under uneven conditions, making fairness a challenge when comparing one school with the next. Many students and their families are highly mobile; a school should not be held accountable for students with whom they have had limited exposure. If students attend alternative education centers or other special programs separate from their neighborhood school, confusion can occur as to the appropriate assignment of responsibility for student performance.

- A system of school-based accountability could be undermined if it does not include incentives to motivate individual students.

Agents who are held responsible for student learning and achievement need to have appropriate discretion to exercise strategic judgment in how the majority of their resources are allocated, who is hired and fired, and how programs are organized and delivered. The school or other agent must also have the capacity necessary to make

good decisions and strategically use resources to help students learn (addressed in Standard 7: Building Agent Capacity).

When an agent is designated with primary responsibility for student achievement it is also important to clarify the responsibility of other individuals and groups to support the agent in its endeavor. Nevertheless, an unnecessarily complicated and confusing set of relationships among a wide range of agents must be carefully avoided.

Massachusetts: Charter Schools and Accountability

Charter schools that promise greater accountability in exchange for more autonomy provide a valuable testing ground for accountability strategies. Yet designing practical systems for accountability is proving tricky. States are struggling with such issues as:

- How can student achievement be fairly compared between charter schools and regular schools?
- If accountability measures differ from one charter school to another, how can accountability be efficiently managed?
- How can equity of family opportunity to enroll children in a charter school be balanced with allowing charter schools flexibility to set enrollment standards?

In a major 1996 study of charter schools, the Hudson Institute noted that no state has yet developed a sound system of results-based evaluation and accountability for charter schools. They concluded that Massachusetts appears closest to one that is both flexible and meaningful for both charter and all other schools:

"The Massachusetts Secretary of Education posed three central questions to guide [a charter] school's evaluation: Is the academic program a success? Is the school a viable organization? And is the school faithful to the terms of its charter?" To judge performance against those three general criteria, Massachusetts asked each school to:

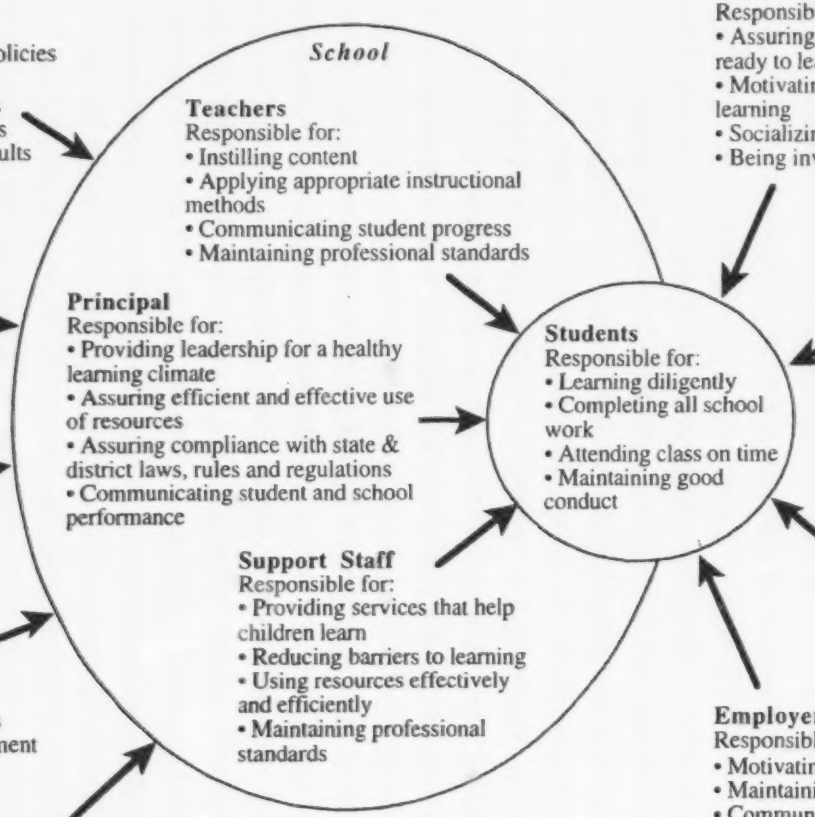
1) Develop and pursue its own clear and measurable school performance objectives;
2) Measure and document progress towards those objectives;
3) Use credible student assessment tools for annually tracking student performance; and
4) Annually report its objectives, progress toward them, and students assessment results, along with other required information requested by the state.

When Massachusetts' new statewide assessments for public education are in place, charter school pupils will be expected to take these as well (Hudson Institute, 1996).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Figure 2

Who is Responsible for Student Performance?



State Education Leaders
Responsible for:
- Establishing a vision and high standards of learning
- Providing adequate resources
- Aligning governing rules and policies
- Establshing administrative institutions, rules and procedures
- Monitoring educational progress
- Communicating educational results

State Agency Staff
Responsible for:
- Providing instructional and materials support to educators
- Providing services including technical assistance

District Leaders
Responsible for:
- Providing leadership for excellence
- Establishing a local policy framework

District Staff
Responsible for:
- Providing instructional and materials support to educators
- Providing operational services including professional development

Higher Education
Responsible for:
- Preparing an adequate number of fully qualified teachers
- Aligning admissions standards with the K-12 education system
- Researching and communicating best education practice
- Motivating students to achieve

Teachers
Responsible for:
- Instilling content
- Applying appropriate instructional methods
- Communicating student progress
- Maintaining professional standards

Principal
Responsible for:
- Providing leadership for a healthy learning climate
- Assuring efficient and effective use of resources
- Assuring compliance with state & district laws, rules and regulations
- Communicating student and school performance

Support Staff
Responsible for:
- Providing services that help children learn
- Reducing barriers to learning
- Using resources effectively and efficiently
- Maintaining professional standards

Students
Responsible for:
- Learning diligently
- Completing all school work
- Attending class on time
- Maintaining good conduct

Parents and Families
Responsible for:
- Assuring student arrives at school ready to learn
- Motivating and reinforcing student learning
- Socializing children
- Being involved in child's school work

General Government Leaders
Responsible for:
- Establishing conditions in which families can thrive
- Communicating expectations for education
- Assuring health and human services

General Public
Responsible for:
- Maintaining a culture of achievement
- Providing adequate financial support to schools

Employers
Responsible for:
- Motivating students to achieve
- Maintaining high hiring standards
- Communicating workforce needs

Identifying responsibilities is important: the "buck" needs to stop somewhere.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Standard 4: Collecting Performance Information

Accountability is based on accurate measures of agent performance as informed by assessments that are administered equitably to all students.

Indicators:

1) The governing organizations collect data on student progress in achieving performance standards from assessments administered at designated intervals (e.g., 4th, 8th, and 10th grades).

2) Assessments and student academic standards are aligned.

3) Multiple assessments serving different purposes are used to capture a complete picture of student progress and agent performance.

4) Test elements meet rigorous standards for validity and reliability and are free of racial, ethnic, or cultural bias.

5) All students participate in assessments, with appropriate accommodations and supports as necessary to ensure their equal opportunity to perform. Alternative assessments are provided for a strictly limited number of students unable to participate in regular assessments due to disability or language.

6) Tests are economically feasible, secure from tampering, and their administration does not overburden schools and teachers.

7) Data are collected on critical student characteristics as well as program delivery and implementation at the school level.

Discussion:

Information must be systematically collected to measure the progress of agents in achieving the goals of the accountability system. Assessments designed to measure student performance on content related goals and standards are the major tools used to collect performance data.

The Study Group promotes the use of multiple assessments to measure student learning (see box on page 26 for a list of types of assessments). **Maryland** provides a good example of how such a strategy can take advantage of the relative strengths of different assessments. They use criterion-referenced tests and performance assessments in their state accountability system, but allow districts the option of using norm-referenced tests to provide comparisons with national norms.

Regardless of the type of assessment(s) chosen for accountability purposes, issues of accuracy are critical. In the terminology of assessment professionals, four of the most important concerns are validity, reliability, comparability, and test security.

Validity: Validity relates to the ability of a test to measure what it intends to measure. If the goal is to measure student learning of specified content standards, then it is essential that assessments be aligned with those standards. The conditions under which an assessment is administered can also affect validity.

Reliability: Reliability refers to the degree of consistency in the results of a particular test. Regardless of how well an assessment measures what it intends to measure, in practice does it produce the same results under equal conditions? If the test produces vastly different results for the same or similar students who have not been exposed to additional material then its reliability comes into question.

Comparability: What happens when different tests produce different results for the same student? Different tests used in a single accountability system must be comparable and complement each other to produce a well-rounded picture of student achievement.

Types of Assessments

Different types of assessments are best suited to measure different goals and performance objectives. Five major types are:

Norm-Referenced Tests. These are commercially developed assessments that provide comparisons of student and school results with nationally representative samples of student scores, called norms. The tests are generally inexpensive, easily administered on a large scale, and easily understood by parents. However, test items may not be well aligned with student academic standards adopted by a state or community.

Criterion-Referenced Tests. These are custom developed assessments specifically designed to match a framework of content standards. When properly designed they are well suited to large scale assessment purposes. However, they tend to be significantly more expensive to develop.

Customized Norm-Referenced Tests. In response to market demand, a new hybrid is emerging. Commercial test publishers are developing customized norm-referenced assessments which are off-the-shelf tests revised to match state or local content standards, but which can still provide national comparisons.

Portfolio Assessments. Portfolios are essentially collections of actual student work over time, rated according to established guidelines. These assessments, most widely implemented by **Kentucky** and **Vermont**, provide a close-up look at how a student is progressing, and serve as a valuable professional development tool for teachers. Portfolios are not suited to large scale comparisons and critics continue to question the validity of portfolios. They are also expensive to develop, administer and score.

Performance Assessments. Similar to portfolios, performance assessments involve the examination of actual products developed by students, such as a painting, tape recorded report or laboratory project, but the products are not compiled over time. They are particularly effective in connecting teaching and testing. Research indicates that students with disabilities generally are more comfortable with performance and portfolio assessments than standardized tests.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Security: When assessment results carry high-stakes consequences, human nature is such that some people are tempted to cheat. Several presenters to the Study Group involved in statewide testing systems emphasized the need for enhanced measures to assure that tests are tamper-proof and not seen in advance.

Accommodations for Students with Special Needs

All students need to be included in assessments to ensure that schools accept responsibility for each and every student. Students with disabilities or from non-English speaking families can experience difficulty learning and performing on traditional assessments without sufficient accommodations and support services. Accommodations that target the specific learning needs of individual students are often necessary to give them equal opportunity to perform. Research shows that accommodations working best for particular students in classrooms are the most effective in supporting them during assessments. See the the report of 1997 NASBE Study Group on Statewide Assessment Systems, *The Full Measure*, for details on appropriate accommodations.

Cost Considerations:

A state or district must also weigh costs when designing an accountability system. The Study Group endorses the "APPLE" criteria presented by Joan Baratz-Snowden of the American Federation of Teachers to the 1997 NASBE Study Group on Statewide Assessments. She suggested that any high stakes assessment ought to have the following characteristics:

Administrative feasibility—the burden of administering the assessment, in terms of lost instructional time and ease of administration, is not prohibitive;
Professional acceptability—teachers and principals support the assessment;
Public credibility—the public believes the assessment is fair and measures valued skilled and knowledge;
Legal defensibility—the test is valid, reliable, and free of racial, ethnic or gender bias; and
Economic affordability—the assessment is economically feasible.

State and national testing programs are often resisted on the grounds that students are already tested too much. When designing an accountability system efforts must be made to coordinate different testing programs so that results complement each other, administration schedules are streamlined, and the same skills and knowledge are not being repeatedly tested. Integrating assessments so they are a valuable tool of the instructional process will help reduce staff resistance.

Collecting Data on School Programs and Student Characteristics:

The extent to which the curriculum and support services in a school are aligned with educational goals can significantly influence student achievement (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989). Student performance on well designed assessments will fall short if the students are not sufficiently exposed to appropriate and challenging standards-based content, if a school lacks the capacity or motivation to deliver challenging programs, or if needed social and health support services are not provided.

Maryland: Sampling

In order to keep the administration time of the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program to a minimum, each student is given only a portion of the test. Consequently, a complete MSPAP score does not exist for an individual student. This sampling technique is nevertheless able to provide needed performance assessment information at the school, district and state levels.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Given these considerations, it is important to collect information on program implementation at the school level. Such data should serve primarily as a basis for planning and providing technical assistance, whether or not the data are to assess compliance with mandated inputs. Useful implementation data include the following:

- The fidelity with which appropriate curricula and services are being delivered;
- The degree to which all students are exposed to rigorous curricula;
- The pattern of resource allocations to programs and services;
- The degree to which teachers and other personnel have learned the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully implement effective programs for all students; and
- The level of support state/district personnel, community organizations, and families give to school programs and services.

Information about certain schools processes and inputs can also be helpful:

- School and average class sizes;
- Professional development activities;
- Leadership and management practices;
- Planning procedures;
- Student support services;
- School-community relations;
- Organization of the school;
- Revenue available per student;
- Adequacy of space, supplies and technology; and
- Characteristics about school climate and internal expectations for student performance.

Finally, to understand the broader context in which any given school is operating, the following data is useful:

- Average family income levels;
- Student enrollment by race and gender;
- Percent of students with disabilities;
- Percent of student for whom English is a second language; and
- Other student, family and community data that help explain performance results.

Few states and communities systematically collect process and implementation data. One major problem is cost: doing this on a wide scale can be expensive. States are finding the most cost effective means is to ask local schools to collect the data, which has the added benefit of helping schools to better understand their own conditions.

Standard 5: Analyzing and Reporting Performance Information

Those responsible for governing accountability regularly report student and school performance information in useful terms and on a timely basis to school staff, students and their families, state and local policymakers, and the news media.

Indicators:

1) Schoolwide scores for student performance are analyzed in several ways, including absolute performance in relation to standards, degree of improvement over their previous performance, and in comparison with predicted scores based on contextual conditions.

2) Student performance data are reported in aggregated school-wide averages and in disaggregated form to draw attention to defined subpopulations whose performance merits particular attention such as students with disabilities, students eligible for free or reduced price lunch, students of different racial/ethnic backgrounds, and students with special language needs.

3) Student scores are provided to teachers for their individual students within the same academic year in which the student takes the assessment and is used to improve classroom practice.

4) Performance reports are produced using language and formats appropriate to their various intended audiences. Reports include thorough explanations of the meaning of the results, the limitations of the data, and important student and school contextual factors that may affect student achievement.

5) Education decision makers use student performance results as guides for improving policy and practice.

6) Operation of the accountability system maintains the confidentiality of individual students.

Discussion:

Analysis and reporting are central aspects of an accountability system because publicly released performance results can strengthen "community accountability" (Henry, 1996). Many states have underestimated the power of effective reporting as a means to encourage and support school improvement. The conflicts and setbacks that can occur without well-designed communications also tend to be underappreciated.

A central issue in the analysis and reporting of student performance data is determining what constitutes the satisfactory performance of agents. Two approaches are widely used: comparing student performance against absolute standards, and assessing the degree of improvement in student performance (sometimes referred to as "value-added" gain). A third approach is also gaining currency: to compare the achievement and progress of students and schools in relation to what could be predicted based on their backgrounds and contextual conditions. Yet another method of analyzing school performance is to focus attention on how certain subpopulations are doing in relation to the overall student average. Each approach is described in the box on page 30.

Approaches to Comparing Student Performance Data

***Comparison Against Absolute Standards*:**

States and communities frequently report student performance data in terms of the percentage who meet or exceed predetermined absolute standards. Schools are often placed in categories such as below proficiency, proficient, and advanced based on their average student scores compared with the standards. A major benefit of this approach is that it communicates standards apply to all students. A weakness is that schools with a disproportionate share of well prepared, high achieving students will be advantaged when compared with other schools that have a large proportion of underprepared students.

Comparing Rates of Progress at Improving Student Performance:

There are a number of different approaches to calculating educational progress, or value-added. First, the average score for student performance at a given school can be compared from one year to the next, or over a given period of time. Another approach is to collect and report student performance on a longitudinal basis, that is, tracking scores of individual students as they move through different grade levels. The major advantage of assessing a schools progress at improving student performance is that it focuses attention on each school in terms that are both fair and useful. However, this type of analysis potentially holds students to different standards.

Comparing Gains with Predicted Performance:

A third way gain scores can be analyzed and reported is to compare the performance of a particular student or school against statistically predicted achievement levels. Such predictions can be reasonably estimated based on prior performance in combination with important contextual characteristics of the student or school which have been demonstrated to influence academic achievement. A variation of this type of analysis is to compare schools with similar socio-economic and demographic characteristics when reporting scores. For example, in addition to reporting the performance of its 166 schools districts according to absolute achievement levels, **Connecticut** also clusters the districts into nine education reference groups based on socioeconomic status, indicators of need, and enrollment.

***Comparing Gains Among Selected Subpopulations*:**

It does little good to mandate that the performance of all students be assessed if their results are buried in schoolwide averages. A good system of education accountability should effectively motivate school staff to accept responsibility for educating everyone. Basing accountability on schoolwide averages can become a perverse incentive that motivates schools to focus their efforts on raising the scores of students whose performance can be improved more easily than students with special needs. Groups appropriately targeted for such disaggregated (separate) reporting include students with disabilities, students eligible for free or reduced price lunch, students of particular racial/ethnic backgrounds, and students with special language needs.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The tradeoffs between using absolute, value-added, expected, and distributional performance scores are among the greatest of dilemmas and challenges encountered in designing an education accountability system focused on student achievement. The need for widespread public understanding and support of the system argues for accountability that is easy to explain, quick to embrace, simple to apply, and allows no excuses for poor performance. A system that is too complex might actually defeat some of its intended purposes.

Yet, the many variables that affect student achievement make it dangerous to oversimplify. Complexity is an inevitable consequence of efforts to assure fairness and to support practical improvements by taking into account factors such as available resources, student mobility, teacher qualifications, and socio-economic backgrounds. Despite the costs and drawbacks of a heterogeneous approach to analysis and reporting, the NASBE Study Group suggests using a combination of each type of analysis to the extent feasible.

Levels of Reporting

Performance and useful contextual data can be reported to allow for comparisons at several different levels:

Student. Performance information at the student level is typically used in states and districts to certify students for promotion or graduation (used for this purpose in half the states), to keep families informed of their students' progress, to guide individual student achievement, and to assist with school and classroom improvement.

Classroom. Data on classroom performance are used in many district systems, but are rarely reported by state systems. Collecting and reporting this information can be useful for monitoring teacher performance over time, which can effectively improve classroom practices if used properly. Data can be collected on both student performance and classroom processes and behaviors.

School. Most districts and some states use the school as the primary reporting unit. Comparisons are made to identify school level progress toward standards and goals at a specific point in time, or over a period of time. The results often figure in decisions about school accreditation. School level reporting is especially useful for planning and providing support to schools needing improvement.

District. Some states report district level performance in the same way school level data are used in other states. The advantages of district level reporting are feasibility and cost. Data collection is more limited than with school level reporting. The critical disadvantage is that schools within a district typically differ widely in performance. Plus, schools are where most educational programs and services are actually delivered, not districts.

Establishing Performance Standards

Performance standards are typically set by panels appointed at the state or local level. These panels make the ultimate decisions on what is considered successful performance based on their judgments of samples of student work. Statistical programs are then often used to convert initial panel judgments into proposed scores, from which they consider the implications of these scores in light of actual performance data. The final step is to establish a set of absolute cut-off scores which allow student performance to be assigned to various proficiency levels (Education Commission of the States, 1998).

Deciding on satisfactory performance levels is sensitive and difficult, because ultimately the decisions are subjective judgement calls. Great care must be taken to organize a reliable process. The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) provides one well-developed model.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Family privacy and the protection of personal confidentiality demand that the identity of individual students not be consciously or inadvertently reported to the public at large. Some critics point out the danger of violating students' privacy when scores are disaggregated for small numbers of students. A way around this valid objection is to require, such as Texas does, that any given group include a minimum of ten students in a school before their scores are separately reported.

Information Needs to be Useful

An accountability system will serve little purpose if data are not reported in terms which policymakers, parents, educators, and the public find useful. Data must be reported not only on performance scores, but also include meaningful information about context and process so that the recipient can put the results into perspective. Although schools should not be held accountable for factors not within their control, contextual information can be useful in helping them improve their instructional programs.

To be useful, information must be reported in formats and languages appropriate to any given audience. Plain language—not jargon—should be used whenever possible. Separate reports should be constructed for the governing agency and other policymakers, students, parents, school administrators and teachers, the public, and the media. Some of these may overlap. The level of detail needed by different audiences will differ, but it is important that accountability information be shared with everyone who has a stake in student learning and academic achievement.

Finally, to be useful, information must be reported on a timely basis. Too often schools and teachers receive performance data at a point in the school year when it is no longer instructionally useful.

Texas: Disaggregating Test Scores

Texas has successfully pioneered the strategy of highlighting the test scores of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, African-American, and Hispanic students. The intention was to prevent schools from simply trying to raise their average scores by focusing on the best students. Schools must therefore demonstrate that students in the defined groups are also progressing in tandem.

Missouri: Constructively Using Disaggregated Data

It is important for states and districts to *act* on data when it is collected. Missouri provides a good example of this. Serious racial disparities in student scores on the tough new Missouri Assessment Program tests led to the creation of a 25-member task force to study the performance of African-American students. The recent task force report, a year in the making, outlines eleven recommendations for closing the gap. They include setting high expectations for student performance at school and at home, improving attendance, and making high-quality preschool programs available.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Connecticut: Strategic School Profiles

Each local board of education in Connecticut submits to the state a school profile report for each school and the school district as a whole. The comprehensive profiles contain the following information:

School Characteristics
- Grade range
- Enrollment
- Special programs
- Staffing
- Race/ethnicity and sex of professional staff

Student Needs
- Percent of low-income families
- Percent of non-English home language
- Percent of kindergarten students with preschool experience
- Percent of high school students working

School Resources
- Average class size
- Instructional time
- Selected facilities available
- Learning resources and technology available
- Staffing ratios
- Educational background of professional staff
- Parent involvement

School Performance
- Minutes per week of instruction
- Parent, student and teacher questionnaires concerning instruction, school environment, and school-community relations
- Bilingual language arts instruction
- Staff attendance
- Professional development and in-service activities
- Student course-taking patterns

Student Scores on Connecticut Mastery Test, Grades 4, 6, and 8
- Percent at or above remedial standard
- Percent of growth over time
- Percent at or above state goal
- Participation rate

Student Performance
- Attendance
- Physical fitness
- Participation in school activities
- SAT results: percent scoring 600 and above and participation rate
- High school courses for college credit
- Dropouts
- Graduation requirements
- Supplemental school information

School and District Analyses
- School improvement plans
- Policy recommendations

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Standard 6: Incentives and Consequences

Incentives are established that effectively motivate agents to improve student learning. Consequences, which could include rewards, interventions or sanctions, are predictably applied in response to performance results.

Indicators:

1) The accountability system encourages self-evaluation and self-improvement at every level.

2) The accountability system includes affordable incentives and consequences in the form of rewards, interventions and sanctions designed to motivate and enhance the agent responsible for student learning and achievement.

3) Unsatisfactory student performance relative to standards or lack of forward progress triggers a calibrated series of interventions with the agent, which might range from technical assistance and capacity building to the reconstitution of entire schools or districts as a last resort.

4) Student promotion and graduation are linked with satisfactory performance on appropriate assessments.

5) Agents accountable for student learning and performance clearly understand what they are responsible for and how rewards, interventions and sanctions are decided on.

6) People and institutions being sanctioned have due process avenues for appeal.

Discussion:

It is important for state and local accountability systems to structure incentives that effectively motivate students and agents to pursue the goals of the system (Adams & Kirst, 1998). Determining the right mix of consequences is another of the very challenging tasks of designing an accountability system. States and districts are currently experimenting with a wide variety of strategies, involving various mixes of rewards, interventions and sanctions. Although much still needs to be learned, enough experience has accumulated to reach some preliminary conclusions as to what works best.

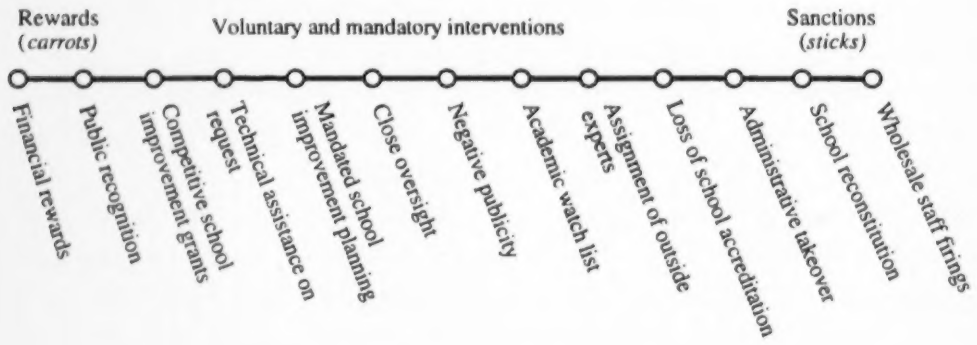
Research finds that agents become motivated when they judge program goals to be personally useful (Ford, 1992). Internal expectations within a school professional community--group values and beliefs regarding instructional practices and appropriate goals for student learning—powerfully shape what teachers are motivated to achieve. The immediate school context rewards or sanctions behavior based on such expectations. Recognizing the importance of these internal motivators, external accountability needs to consist of incentives, supports and assistance that help to encourage a school's internal expectations to match the goals of the education system.

Acting on Performance Data

A good accountability system should include a mix of consequences that are triggered in response to student and school performance data. The consequences should include some combination of affordable rewards that serve as positive incentives, voluntary and mandatory interventions that assist agents to perform well (addressed

Figure 3

A Continuum of Incentives and Consequences



in more detail in the discussion of Standard 7), and sanctions that firmly communicate to all that failure is simply unacceptable. Figure 3 illustrates potential measures that might comprise a continuum of consequences.

Agents accountable for student achievement must clearly understand what they are responsible for achieving and why rewards and sanctions are issued. Fairness also requires that agents accountable for student learning have enough professional autonomy to select, change and improve their educational practices in whatever manner they determine works best for them. External control for abusive practices is important, but school autonomy to exercise strategic judgment is a necessary corollary to school level accountability. People and institutions being sanctioned must also have due process avenues for appeal.

Whatever the chosen consequences, it is critical that they be consistently applied so as to communicate the values and goals of the accountability system. Rewards, interventions and sanctions must be perceived as certain and predictable. The granting of waivers or exceptions quickly undermines the credibility of the entire system in the eyes of those whose behavior is being monitored.

Rewards as Positive Incentives

One type of incentive being applied in states and districts is to grant a financial reward to an entire school based on superior performance or steady improvement. Allowing school staff some degree of choice about how to use a financial reward—such as on new computers or a professional development program—can help buttress their autonomy. Parameters for allowed expenditures and the process for deciding on how to use a reward must be carefully deliniated so the reward does not cause conflict.

Many educators are boosted by public recognition of their good performance. Certificates and reward ceremonies can go a long way towards stimulating good performance. State and local boards should not minimize the value of sponsoring citations and trophies. One tangible way businesses can support a local school is to sponsor a reward program for students. With the proper organization and advance work, local and staff media outlets can usually be enticed to provide coverage for reward ceremonies.

Enough experience has accumulated in recent years to conclude that some types of incentives that sound good at the outset are in practice not very effective at motivating improved educational performance. Merit pay for outstanding teachers is one such method. Because one of the proven characteristics of a high-performing school

Philadelphia: Performance Rewards

More than half the schools in Philadelphia met their two-year performance goals under the city's new accountability system and will receive financial awards. The 145 schools (out of 249) that met all their goals will share $5.5 million in reward money at the rate of $1,500 per teacher and $500 per other staff member at each school. The money, which will be spread out over two years, must be used for overall school improvement in a way to be determined by the school's governing council.

The index to determine each school's performance is based on scores on the SAT-9 standardized test in reading, math and science, as well as other factors including student and staff attendance, the promotion rate in grades one through eight, and the dropout rate for high schools. One goal of the two-part index requires schools to increase their overall index score at a fast enough rate so that in 12 years—one student generation—95 percent of students will perform at proficient levels in math, reading and science.

The other goal, for the two-year period, requires each school to reduce by 10 percent the number of students who perform below basic competency on the SAT-9, or who do not take the test at all. (Mazzacappa, 1998).

Massachusetts: Shutting Down Colleges of Education

By unanimous vote, the Massachusetts State Board of Education recently voted to shut down college teacher training programs where more than 20 percent of students fail the state's mandatory teacher certification test for two consecutive years.

The measure is in response to the 59 percent failure rate on the first administration of the teacher certification test in April 1998, a basic test of reading, writing and subject matter knowledge. Of 54 colleges whose students took the teacher test, only two met the 80 percent pass threshold.

The new policy will not be implemented until the year 2000. Eventually, the failure threshold will be lowered to 10 percent.

is a high degree of social cohesion among the staff, a merit pay system can quickly backfire if it creates resentment among those not rewarded.

The criteria for deciding which schools, educators, and students get rewarded is a powerful expression of the values at the heart of an accountability system. No matter what messages a board might choose to send through a sophisticated public communications strategy, people will pay most attention to the criteria employed to determine winners and losers.

Sanctions that Motivate

Determining what form sanctions might take is a tricky business. Sanctions must send a clear message of disapproval for poor performance, yet at the same time pave a realistic path to improvement. One of the common uses of reporting school performance data is to publicly shame underperforming schools. This has sometimes proven effective, and some research has found the fear of being shamedmore effective than the prospect of positive rewards (Drummond, 1997). However, if done too harshly or without a sense of fairness it can backfire by causing burning resentment among school staff and undermining staff morale.

Punitive sanctions can be particularly destructive if they appear with little warning or a sufficient grace period. To avoid this, states are increasingly phasing in accountability systems over a period of time. This is consistent with the notion that real change takes much time and energy to accomplish.

Similarly, states are recognizing that severe sanctions should not be the first arrow in their quiver. Rather, a carefully calibrated series of intervention measures that include assistance for capacity-building should be employed over time to give underperforming schools every opportunity to identify and address the causes of their poor performance.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Reconstitution and Takeovers

A drastic sanction being used in some states and districts for schools that continue to decline is "reconstitution." This is the practice of completely restaffing a troubled school. The theory is that some schools that have proven incapable of improving student achievement year after year are so dysfunctional in their practices that the most promising hope to turn them around is to dissolve the school and start from scratch with new staff (or previous staff who re-applied for their positions). Last year, at least half a dozen districts resorted to this model, including highly visible systems such as Chicago, San Francisco, and Philadelphia.

Though limited research has been conducted on reconstitution, it is proving to be extremely unpopular in communities where it occurs. One problem is that districts are rushing into reconstitution without committing the necessary time and resources to make it work. Furthermore, the costs of implementation are immediate, but the benefits in terms of improved student learning may only materialize after a period of time. This makes staying the course on reconstitution politically very difficult. Several districts are abandoning their efforts and seeking different strategies.

A measure similar to reconstitution is to declare a school or district "educationally bankrupt" and take over its administration. Some states are employing such "state takeovers" as a last resort for persistently declining schools or districts. The state directly controls all decisions and activities as a means of improving performance. The biggest problem emerging with such takeovers is the question of "What next?" How does the state get out after alienating the local community and its representatives? Another problem is lack of capacity in the state education agency to do the work.

The NASBE Study Group believes that reconstitution and takeovers can only work under the following conditions:

a) It serves as a last resort after employing a series of active interventions to help the schools improve;
b) Criteria for getting out are adopted before going in;
c) The ultimate goal of reconstitution or takeover is to build school capacity and motivation to improve student learning and achievement;
d) The school community (teachers, school administrators and families) are involved in making decisions and designing solutions;
e) Improvement strategies are based on solid performance and process data combined with meaningful analysis and explanation of school problems;
f) A sufficient level of resources is committed; and
g) Sufficient time is granted to the project to make it work.

High Stakes for Students

Accountability systems ultimately turn on students' behavior, especially their performance on assessments. If students are not motivated to perform to the best of their abilities, the validity, reliability and fairness of the entire accountability system can be problematic. Students report they have little incentive to excel on a test that does not personally matter to them as individuals.

Maryland: A Comprehensive System

School-based accountability in Maryland is represented by the Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP), which consists of four elements:

1) indicators and standards of student participation and achievement,
2) an annual school performance report,
3) a school improvement process, and
4) sanctions and recognition.

In the MSPP, indicators are identified as measures of how well schools, school systems, and the state are improving student performance in relation to state standards. Each year, individual schools issue a report card on progress toward meeting state standards. MSPP judges the performance of school districts and individual schools against their own growth from year to year. Based on a combination of their average student scores measured by both absolute performance and upward progress, Maryland schools are placed in one of the following categories:

- Above Standards and Improving
- Above Standards and Not Improving
- Below Standards and Improving
- Below Standards and Not Improving

School improvement teams at the school level use report data as the guide for making decisions about how to improve school performance. Schools significantly below state standards and declining become eligible for state intervention or reconstitution. Decisions about reconstitution are a last resort and based on the school's own history and circumstances, not school-by-school comparisons. Schools declared eligible for reconstitution must submit a proposal outlining how they will address their problems. If the proposal is unacceptable, the next step could be state intervention, which may involve finding a third party to run the school (MSDE, 1998).

We must not forget that students are active participants in the education system. Too often, it is assumed they passively perform without goals and objectives of their own. Students often have interests that are disconnected from school and from externally defined goals for their performance. Incentives are often not structured to motivate them to pursue state or district goals.

As with agents responsible for student achievement, students themselves also need incentives to perform to high standards and they must accept consequences for their level of achievement. Student performance-based systems should be structured to certify student learning and determine whether students should be promoted. The NASBE Study Group supports this as a means for motivating students, but with the condition that quality educational programs developing content knowledge and developing skills consistent with the assessments are being delivered in schools. Some students will also need special supports, accommodations and services to learn and perform as expected.

Test results should not be the *only* basis for deciding whether a student advances to the next grade or whether a student will be able to graduate (National Research Council, 1998). Other factors should also be considered including grades and teacher recommendations. When used inappropriately, standardized tests can undermine the quality of education and reduce opportunities for some students, especially if test results are misinterpreted or misused, or if students are relegated to low-quality educational experiences as a result of their scores.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Although attaching high stakes of promotion and graduation to student performance on assessments is necessary, policymakers also need to recognize that holding students back without appropriate remediation can significantly shortchange their lives.

Finally, the impact of higher education admissions standards on the motivation of college-bound students must be emphasized. Requirements for admission into higher education send powerful signals to parents and students of what students should be able to know and do. Accountability systems should be designed to encourage

Social Promotion

Chicago is getting much attention by taking a hard line against the concept of "social promotion," the practice of passing underperforming students along to the next grade with their peer group. In the Fall of 1997 more than 23,000 Chicago students were retained in grade, despite having attended mandatory summer school. The new policy has met a chorus of criticism from parents and social scientists worried about student alienation, damage to their psyches, and increased dropout rates. A large body of past research is clear that children who repeat a grade are 20 to 40 percent more likely to become discouraged and drop out of school. Retention is expensive, and putting teenagers back into elementary school is not feasible. Although Chicago has established eleven "transition" schools for remedial education, almost half the students who had to attend them in the 1997–98 school year were still not ready to go on to high school. Some people worry that alternative schools will be perceived as a "failure track."

Nevertheless, school chief Paul Vallas is holding firm with the tough policy. He calls social promotion "educational malpractice" and "racist" because it most often occurs with minority students. "No more excuses" is the mantra of those who agree with him, who include the city's teacher unions, President Clinton, and more and more states, cities and school districts across the nation. The no-social-promotion policy sends a powerful signal to students, families and the general public that poor educational achievement is unacceptable. If efforts are thereby focused on preventing educational failure in the first place, hopes are that harsh policies on retention won't be necessary in the future.

States are exploring different solutions to these dilemmas. **Ohio's** 1997 accountability law contains a requirement that students must pass the state's fourth-grade proficiency test in reading to be promoted to fifth grade *unless* the student's reading teacher and principal agree the child is "academically prepared to do fifth grade work."

Similarly, although the **District of Columbia** is putting much emphasis on students' scores on the Stanford 9 achievement tests, decisions on retention also take into account teachers' and principals' evaluations of the students.

Delaware's new accountability law specifies that students must demonstrate proficiency in reading to be promoted out of grades 3, 5, 8, and 10. If retained, the student must pursue a course of study specifically designed to improve his or her reading ability. But if the student's performance in reading continues to be deficient, the law does not require further retention. Instead, the school district must develop an individual improvement plan for the student.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

a K-16 perspective to foster additional incentives for high student performance. This is addressed further in Standard 8 on Policy Alignment.

Public School Choice and Accountability

The concept of providing families choices among schools and educational programs is gaining increasing attention as another strategy for education accountability. In addition to providing parents and students with a wider choice of educational programming, charter schools, magnet schools, and open enrollment programs bring elements of the free market into the public school system. Theoretically, competitive market forces, when allowed to operate unfettered, ought to provide incentives for every school to compete with each other on quality. If families could easily pull their children out of underperforming schools, the schools would eventually close—a true consequence. Education researcher Denis Doyle considers school choice "the ultimate accountability mechanism." Other observers, however, point out that families choose schools for many different reasons besides quality, such as convenience or a particular program being offered, and that quality itself can mean different things to different people.

Researchers cannot yet offer reliable conclusions about the successful implementation of "market accountability" strategies. Yet in order for any choice-based system to work well all families must have equal access to good quality information about school performance to prevent market failure. Thus, even in a system of choice it is necessary to collect and report information on student achievement and school capacity.

So that families are presented with real choices, schools should be granted wide discretion for making their own decisions about curricula, instructional strategies, areas of specialization, and use of resources. All schools must nevertheless conform with civil rights protections to assure equal access to all students. In addition, every school must still answer to the state for its performance, because states are constitutionally charged with assuring that all children have access to high quality education.

Delaware: Accountability and Choice

The process of political compromise left Delaware's new accountability legislation with fewer "teeth" than originally proposed. The most serious state sanction is for the Secretary of Education to investigate and make public her recommendations for a school or district that has lost its accreditation and not yet regained it after two years. The local school board, which retains ultimate decision making authority, is under no obligation to follow the recommendations.

Nevertheless, state policymakers expect that with statewide open enrollment and well-publicized school report cards, public shaming combined with the threat of fleeing families will be a powerful incentive for schools to avoid losing their accreditation status.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Standard 7: Building Agent Capacity

Agents are provided sufficient support and assistance to ensure they have the capacity necessary to help students achieve high performance standards.

Indicators:

1) All schools are capable of exercising school-wide strategic judgment in organizing curricula and allocating resources to enhance student learning.

2) All teachers, administrators and other school personnel are capable of working as a collaborative community focused on student learning as their highest priority.

3) All schools have an adequate number of teachers and support personnel.

4) Teachers in all schools possess the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to help all students learn.

5) All schools are equipped with adequate and appropriate technology, supplies and physical space to effectively deliver programs and services.

6) Professional development is provided to teachers, principals and other personnel on knowledge and skills needed to achieve student performance goals and implement the accountability system.

7) Technical assistance is targeted to low performing schools to enhance their capacity to help students achieve high performance standards.

Discussion:

A number of policymakers are beginning to recognize that clear standards and strong incentives are not alone sufficient to improve school and student performance (CPRE, 1998). Regardless of how motivated an agent is to attain the goals of the accountability system, such goals cannot be achieved if the agent lacks the capacity to do so. As schools and teachers attempt to improve achievement among all students, many will likely encounter issues related to capacity (Newmann, King, & Rigdon, 1997).

Capacity describes the extent to which something can be achieved or produced, assuming a sufficient level of motivation is present (CPRE, 1997) (see figure below). At the school level there are two types to consider, classroom and school-wide capacity.

standards + motivation + capacity = high performance

Classroom Capacity

Classrooms are where teaching and learning primarily occurs. Whether the human and physical resources at the classroom level are sufficient for effective instruction to take place depends on the extent to which the following are present (Corcoran & Goertz, 1995):

- Adequate quantity and quality of staff;
- High levels of knowledge, skills, and dispositions among faculty and support staff;
- High levels of student motivation, knowledge, and involvement;
- Trusting social relationships;
- Quality curriculum materials; and
- Appropriate support services.

Schools differ in the degree to which their classrooms have adequate capacity to foster student learning and achievement. Within schools, individual classrooms typically also exhibit different levels of capacity. This creates uneven conditions for student learning both across and within schools.

School-Wide Capacity

Capacity can also be examined across a school, going beyond individual classrooms (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Critical aspects include the following:

- Shared values, mission, goals, and high expectations for all students;
- Effective school-wide leadership;
- Strategic allocation of resources consistent with mission and goals;
- School-wide organization and staffing arrangements that facilitate teamwork;
- A problem solving professional community that involves all teachers in collaborative activities and continuous peer feedback;
- High quality professional development that occurs as an on-going, natural process consistent with the daily rigors of the school context;
- Trusting and supportive school-community relations;
- Adequate numbers and types of library holdings;
- Adequate amounts and types of school-wide technology, supplies and materials;
- Sufficient space for delivering programs and services; and
- School-wide support services.

These critical elements of school capacity are drawn from a wealth of recent research that provide valuable guidance on how schools can function as effective "learning communities" (Cohen & Ball, 1996; Cuban, 1993; Kruse, Louis, & Bryk, 1995; Muncey & McQuillan, 1995; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Kennedy, 1991; Spillane & Thompson, 1997; Steinberg, 1996). Once again, schools vary in the extent to which these elements of capacity are present.

Building Capacity in Schools

Effective state and district accountability systems can help schools with persistently low or declining student performance results to increase their ability to improve instruction by targeting resources to build school capac-

Illinois: Support Services for Failing Schools

Each Illinois school on the state's Academic Early Warning List (about 125 in 1997) receives special attention from either the Chicago Public Schools or the State Board of the Education in the rest of the state. The new system of support services includes an analysis of the school by an external review panel; appointment of a Support Team; and implementation of a data-driven, research-based school improvement plan.

The Support Team works collaboratively with an Internal School Improvement Team and the entire school community to ensure significant improvements. The Support Team includes: a) a school Coach, a veteran distinguished educator who devotes a minimum of one day per week in the school; b) a State Board Facilitator who supports the school coach by brokering services, serving as a liaison, and managing networking among warning list schools; c) an External Community Team of area higher education, community and business representatives who assist in the development and implementation of a focused school improvement plan; and d) Regional Education Staff who assist in providing professional development and content area support.

The Academic Early Warning system includes several levels of interventions and sanctions; it can result eventually in reassignment of student to other attendance centers, thus closing down a school.

This strategy is only one piece of a comprehensive accountability system that emphasizes building local school capacity for continuous improvement and focuses resources on the lowest performing schools. In addition to the teams that go into failing schools, the state sends review teams into other schools for five-day studies of progress on their required school improvement plans. The positive and nurturing character of these reviews and other services are critical factors in building capacity. Outside evaluators of the new accountability system report that a large majority of local educators are finding it positive and helpful where it has been implemented. The evaluators say they are seeing real improvements in teaching and learning.

North Carolina: State Assistance Teams

The state reports school-by-school scores on state achievement tests. The "ABCs of Public Education" program puts pressure on schools to improve student performance on these assessments. Bonuses are provided to high performing schools and restrictions are placed on low performing schools. When the first results were released in 1997, exemplary status was assigned to 32 percent of the state's elementary and middle schools, while approximately 47 percent failed to show improvement.

More than 120 schools were identified as low performing and were thus required to work with state assistance teams who help school staff by demonstrating effective instructional practices, coaching the teachers, and aligning the school's instructional program with the state's curriculum. The state also suspended principals in 15 schools. Fourteen out of these schools have since satisfied their expected growth rate in student achievement over the last school year. State education officials noted that 13 of the schools reached "exemplary" status by achieving at least 10 percent above expected growth.

Recently the state initiated NC HELPS, or North Carolina Helping Education in Low-Performing Schools. A joint project of the State Board/Department of Public Instruction, the Governor's office, university system, and community colleges, NC HELPS will provide financial resources from state and federal funds and professional development for teachers and administrators to build and sustain their capacity for long-term change. Services will include needs assessments, evaluation of personnel, data analysis, curriculum alignment, mentoring, research, and classroom management and other development assistance.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ity. The Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE, 1998) reports five strategies being used in a sample of states:

- Developing state and district infrastructure to provide professional development and technical assistance;
- Setting standards for professional development and training;
- Helping local educators find or develop curriculum materials that address high standards;
- School improvement planning; and
- Creating professional networks of teachers for opportunities to share and learn about practices from others outside their school environment.

State departments of education are shifting from their traditional regulatory role to focus more on providing services and assistance to districts and schools. State departments are creating decentralized support systems involving a wide range of actors external to the department to work directly with school sites. In part, this addresses concerns about the capacity of state departments to provide necessary levels of assistance. It may also help institutionalize reform efforts and capacity building at the targeted school sites, as research suggests improvements are more likely to result when schools are supported by ongoing supports tailored to the local setting (Cohen & Hill, 1998).

The NASBE Study Group supports the concept of capacity building and professional development as the primary tools through which the problems of low performing and declining schools are addressed.

Guam: New Program Budgeting Model

Guam is using its accountability system to guide the appropriate allocation of resources as one part of school improvement. The Territorial Department of Education is implementing the Program Budgeting model of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to allow it to gauge the proportion of schools' budgets being used for direct instruction, support services, and non-instructional services.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Standard 8: Policy Alignment

Policymakers work to ensure that education policies, mandated programs, financial resources, and the accountability system are well aligned so that consistent messages are communicated about educational goals and priorities.

Indicators:

1) Education policymakers ensure that the accountability system and other education policies (e.g., student content standards, licensure and certification systems, staff development programs, college of education accreditation requirements, public school choice policies, education finance systems) are consistent with the goals and strategies of the accountability system.

2) Those responsible for governing accountability identify and make recommendations regarding statutes, rules and regulations that are in conflict with achieving the goals of the accountability system.

3) Governing organizations assess the degree to which the policies and expectations of accreditation agencies and professional associations are aligned with the goals of the accountability system.

4) The accountability system includes an assessment of the degree to which higher education prepares an adequate number of well-qualified administrators, teachers and support staff.

Discussion:

Aligning major education policies and the operational components of an accountability system is necessary for accountability to be effective. Student standards, assessments and teacher licensure policies must send coherent, consistent signals of what is expected of schools and teachers. Pre-service training and ongoing professional development programs must effectively prepare educators to be able to ensure that all their students can achieve high standards of learning and achievement.

Colleges and universities can buttress—or undermine—an education accountability system. If college admissions criteria are not well aligned with the academic standards being used in the K-12 system, schools and students who aspire to higher education face conflicting signals on what should take priority in the instructional program. If high school transcripts and statewide assessment results are generally ignored by admissions and placement offices, college-bound students have little incentive to take these accountability mechanisms seriously. Elementary, secondary and higher education policymakers need to all work closely together to establish a seamless "K-16" perspective that informs policy at every level.

As education reforms proceed, a wide range of existing policies, mandates and laws frequently are typically found to conflict with the new improvement initiatives. Instead of a single, coherent system, legal and programmatic demands are often placed on schools in layers. To use a real-life example in **Delaware**, newly instituted school-based planning came into conflict with a state mandate for a certain number of hours of bicycle safety instruction. Education policymakers must therefore make a concerted effort to identify and address inconsistent policies and practices.

Arizona: "A Synergistic Effect"

The Arizona State Board of Education is currently:

- Developing student assessments based on the state's approved standards;
- Establishing policies to encourage choice of schools;
- Adopting a minimum course of study and competency requirements for promotion of pupils from third grade and eighth grade, and competency requirements and tests for high school graduation;
- Developing school report cards;
- Requiring district assessment plans;
- Adopting teacher/administrator certification rules and proficiency examinations; and
- Developing an individual student tracking system for financial accountability, possibly for academic accountability as well.

By addressing these multiple layers to standards-based reform all at the same time, the Arizona State Board is trying to create a synergistic effect. The universities and teacher preparation schools, district professional development programs, site-based councils and parent involvement groups, curriculum development programs, and student assessment efforts will all be impacted simultaneously because no portion of the "reform pie" can be accomplished without all pieces being affected.

Indiana: Performance-Based Accreditation

Indiana used to accredit its schools based primarily on each school's ability to provide resources and meet legal standards. These earlier requirements included such considerations as availability of textbooks, curriculum offerings, and certification of professional staff.

In 1987 the General Assembly enacted legislation to create an accreditation system that focuses on the *results* of the educational process. The Performance-Based Accreditation (PBA) system still includes a mechanism to verify compliance with certain education laws and rules. However, it stresses examining student achievement and school success in educating students.

PBA also has a third purpose in providing a planning, improvement, and program evaluation model for schools. It establishes a school improvement planning process to facilitate self-study and improvement within schools and provides opportunities for representatives of each school community to address the following fundamental questions:

- What are students expected to learn and be able to do?
- How can educators best teach students what they need to learn and be able to do?
- What resources are necessary to facilitate the teaching/learning process?
- How can the school community evaluate what students have learned and how well they have been taught?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Standard 9: Public Understanding and Support

The accountability system has widespread support.

Indicators:

1) Significant numbers of students, parents, K-12 educators, higher education leaders and faculty, business leaders, policymakers, and the public demonstrate they accept and support the broad elements of the accountability system.

2) State and local boards of education engage school communities (administrators, teachers, parents, students) and other members of local communities in an on-going dialogue about continuous improvement of student learning and achievement as informed by the accountability system.

3) Discussion of student performance results and needed school improvements regularly occur in community forums.

4) Those responsible for governing accountability involve school communities in decision-making processes regarding necessary interventions.

Discussion:

To be effective, an education accountability system must be solidly entrenched and perceived to be "here to stay." Many educators have learned to be skeptical of education policy trends that sweep the nation and then quietly disappear within a few years. Accountability goals should therefore be well-supported by a broad spectrum of education policymakers and community leaders. A reliable political base can be critically important in helping the system stay the course.

The degree to which the public supports an accountability system will greatly impact its success. "Public" refers to the wide range of individuals and groups who have a stake in student learning. This includes students and their families, educational administrators, other K-12 professionals, leaders and faculty in postsecondary education, the business community, the news media, and other interested citizens. The public in this broad sense has the power through democratic political processes to create and define the accountability system—and also to constrain or significantly revise the system in negative ways.

Kentucky provides a recent example of an innovative assessment system that underwent major change, and was nearly abolished, because of uneven support in the legislature. A new assessment system being developed in California became politically controversial and was cancelled in 1996 (Kirst & Mazzeo, 1996). Occasionally a community rises up in sudden opposition to an accountability system because of poor student performance, alleging that the assessments used were invalid, but without examining other issues such as the quality of program delivery in schools and classrooms. On a positive note, **Maryland** State Superintendent of Schools Nancy Grasmick credits widespread public confidence in the state's accountability efforts for the 14 percent increase the legislature granted the public education system in 1998.

Any accountability system must have the stability and authority necessary for making improvements and staying the course on its strategies, while remaining responsive to political demands as necessary in a healthy democratic society. This is especially challenging given the multiple, competing interests and goals for education. In developing a balance between stability and responsiveness, states and districts must seek to engage the public in designing and executing the accountability system on an ongoing basis. Grass roots input when building, operating and fine-tuning the system will enhance public understanding of how education accountability works and generate buy-in and support.

It is especially important that students and families understand the purposes and value of an accountability system. Earlier this year, majorities of parents in three suburban **Michigan** districts signed waivers to exempt their children from taking the Michigan Education Assessment Program high school test. News reports explained that high-achieving, college-bound students did not want to risk poor scores on their transcripts.

Oregon: Public Communications Campaign

The Oregon Legislature recently allocated $1 million for a major communications project named "Seeds of Change: The Oregon Schools Initiative," an effort to inform the public about higher academic standards in schools. The campaign consists of radio and television advertisements and handbooks for parents, teachers and administrators in English, Spanish and other languages.

The campaign has been attacked as a misuse of taxpayers' dollars, even though a major advertising agency is donating its services to develop the materials. Key state leaders of both parties support the initiative because polls find that a discouragingly low number of Oregonians understand—or are even aware of—the state's comprehensive school reform program begun in 1991, and that their level of awareness has actually dropped in recent years.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Standard 10: Partnerships

Various established partnerships work together to support districts, schools and teachers in their efforts to improve student achievement.

Indicators:

1) Public K-12 schools and families work together as partners to ensure all students learn and achieve to high standards.

2) Public K-12 education and higher education work together as partners to ensure schools and teachers are capable of achieving the student achievement goals of the accountability system (e.g., technical assistance, preservice training of teachers, student admission and placement criteria).

3) Public K-12 education, human service agencies, and other organizations involved in education work together in a coordinated fashion to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to learn and develop.

4) Public K-12 education works with the business community to improve student learning and development.

Discussion:

Families have a major impact on the learning and achievement of their children in school. To support student attainment of the performance goals defined in the accountability system, schools and parents must work together as educational partners. This can occur when schools help parents learn how to be involved in their child's education at home. It is also developed as schools become open communities fostering parental involvement as volunteers and as participants in school governance.

National PTA: National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs

Standard I: ***Communicating***—Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.

Standard II: ***Parenting***—Parenting skills are promoted and supported.

Standard III: ***Student Learning***—Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.

Standard IV: ***Volunteering***—Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.

Standard V: ***School Decision Making and Advocacy***—Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.

Standard VI: ***Collaborating with Community***—Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Delaware: Parent Accountability

Delaware's new accountability legislation requires the State Department of Education to work with the Delaware Congress of Parents and Teachers to produce a "Parent's Declaration of Responsibilities" that identifies elements of effective parental involvement and the role of the public schools in helping parents meet those responsibilities. Local districts and schools are encouraged to adopt the Declaration of Responsibilities as local policy, and to urge parents to commit themselves to carry out their responsibilities to the best of their abilities. Of course, any such agreement between a parents and a public school is not legally enforceable. Nevertheless, it sends a powerful symbolic message throughout the state.

States and communities are also increasingly recognizing the importance of health and social conditions as major factors impacting student achievement. Some students have special needs which require special attention and support. In order to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to make steady progress in academic learning and human development, schools and other human service agencies must work together as a team to address the needs of the "whole" child or youth (CCSSO, 1998).

Colleges and universities can play a very significant role in supporting or constraining the capacity of schools to attain the goals of the accountability system. First, faculty resources can be used to improve instructional programs and enhance school effectiveness in general. Partnerships ought to be established whereby faculty both within and without schools of education work hand in hand with districts and schools to address problems related to learning. This can occur through direct technical assistance and research. Yet despite the potential for improvement through these partnerships, most college faculty operate under a reward system that gives higher priority to theoretical scholarship than to service-oriented partnership activity. Colleges and the K-12 education system need to work together as partners for the common good.

Finally, the business community powerfully affects the success of an education accountability system. Businesses send important signals to students about the value of an education and the knowledge and skills needed in the workforce. One very concrete measure the private sector can take to improve public education is to take seriously the high school transcripts of job applicants. Private businesses can also provide valuable real world problem solving and training experiences for students. Schools and businesses must develop coordinated strategies to ensure maximum use of private resources to help students learn expected knowledge and skills.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

'PASS' As Prologue

The Public Accountability for Student Success (PASS) framework is designed to focus attention on *helping* all schools become high achieving organizations. NASBE embraces this vision for accountability, and urges all states, school districts and schools to craft exemplary systems that meet these standards.

If PASS stands as a record of current thinking on accountability, it also illuminates particular emerging issues, such as the following:

- How can the ability of state and district systems be developed to provide technical assistance which fosters capacity and motivation in low performing schools?
- How can external incentives complement and encourage the development of positive internal expectations operating within schools?
- What truly constitutes valued content, good performance, and satisfactory progress?
- How can students with special needs be included in education accountability systems while maintaining standards for validity and uniformity?
- How are schools best motivated who perform in the middle range, not just those on the extremes of high and low achievement levels, which most incentive structures currently target?
- What is the best way to foster a broader "K–16" perspective in education accountability?
- How can the dynamics associated with parental choice of schools be best incorporated into education accountability systems?
- How can states and districts hold newly emerging forms of education accountable for results, such as Internet-based instruction ("cyber-schools") and school voucher programs?
- How can school systems best address accountability for non-school agents, including parental responsibility, school-business-community-university partnerships, and the work of other agencies who serve youth?

Accountability as a policy tool involves a wide spectrum of issues, dilemmas, conundrums, and competing perspectives. New ones continually emerge. It is ultimately essential to design an accountability system that is adaptable and responsive to changing needs. As the future unfolds, NASBE will continue to study and report on education accountability in all its complexity and assist education policymakers in their efforts to assure that all students learn to high standards.

Appendix A: Study Group Presenters

First Meeting, January 23–24, 1998

PREVIOUS STUDY GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS
Betty Preston Missouri State Board of Education
1995–96 Study Group on Education Governance

Susan Stitham, Alaska State Board of Education
1997 Study Group on Assessment

MODELS OF ACCOUNTABILITY
Michael Kean, Vice-President, CTB/McGraw-Hill
Overview of what's happening across the nation

Susan Fuhrman, Dean, School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania and Director, Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)
Accountability and standards-based reform

Larry Pierce, Center on Reinventing Public Education
Accountability through contracting

SYNTHESIS OF ISSUES
Margaret McNeely, U.S. Department of Education

LOCAL AND BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES
Bob Piening, Retired CEO and Missouri Local School Board Member

Second Meeting, March 13–14, 1998

ACCOUNTABILITY IN MARYLAND
Nancy Grasmick, Maryland State Superintendent of Schools

ACCOUNTABILITY IN NEW YORK
Ed Lalor, New York State Assistant Commissioner for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

ACCOUNTABILITY IN KENTUCKY
Roger Pankratz, Kentucky Institute for Education Research

ACCOUNTABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION
Kati Haycock, The Education Trust

ACCOUNTABILITY AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Don Dailey, NASBE Staff

Third Meeting, June 19–20, 1998

CRITIQUE OF OUR FRAMEWORK
Denis Doyle, Hudson Institute

CRITIQUE OF OUR FRAMEWORK
Eddie Davis, National Education Association and North Carolina State Board of Education

CRITIQUE OF OUR FRAMEWORK
Jacob Adams, Vanderbilt University

CRITIQUE OF OUR FRAMEWORK
Gary Hess, Harcourt-Brace Educational Management

Appendix B: Notable Reports on Accountability

U.S. Department of Education's Office of Education Research and Improvement (OERI), *Creating Responsible and Responsive Accountability Systems*, 1988.

NASBE Study Group on Accountability, *Effective Accountability: Improving Schools, Informing the Public*, 1988.

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), *Moving Toward Accountability for Results: A Look at Ten States' Efforts*, 1995.

Education Commission of the States (ECS), *Designing and Implementing Standards-Based Accountability Systems*, January 1998.

National Center on Educational Outcomes, *NCEO Framework for Educational Accountability*, May 1998.

Education Week, *Quality Counts*, published annually.

Education Week has also recently published a series of articles examining the politics and realities of accountability under the overall title of "Raising the Stakes":

"A New Accountability Player: The Local Newspaper," June 17, 1998.

"Charter Schools Struggle With Accountability," June 10, 1998.

"Peer-Review Programs Catch Hold As Unions, Districts Work Together," June 3, 1998.

"In Age of Accountability, Principals Feel the Heat," May 20, 1998.

"A Question of Value," May 13, 1998.

"In Texas, the Arrival of Spring Means the Focus Is on Testing," April 29, 1998.

"'Distinguished Educators' Train Their Focus on Instruction," April 1, 1998.

"Failing Schools Challenge Accountability Goals," March 25, 1998.

"Tenured Principals: An Endangered Species," March 4, 1998.

"The Push for Accountability Gathers Steam," Feb. 11, 1998.

REFERENCES

Adams, J. & Kirst, M. (1998). *New demands for educational accountability: Striving for results in an era of excellence.* Paper presented at the 1998 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego.

Bryk, A., Lee, V., & Holland, P. (1993). *Catholic schools and the common good.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Consortium for Policy Research in Education. (1997). *Case study research guide: From congress to the classroom.* Philadelphia, PA: Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Cohen, D. & Ball, D. (1996). *Capacity and building capacity for instruction.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

Cohen, D. & Hill, H. (1998). State policy and classroom performance: Mathematics reform in California. *CPRE Policy Briefs*, No. RB-23. Philadelphia, PA: Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Corcoran, T. & Goertz, M. (1995). Instructional capacity and high performance schools. *Educational Researcher*, 24, 27-31.

Council of Chief State School Officers (1998). *Incorporating Health-Related Indicators in Education Accountability Systems.*

Cuban, L. (1993). *How teachers taught: Constancy and change in American classrooms, 1890- 1990.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Drummond, Steven (1997) Bonuses weren't prime reason schools worked to improve, study in Ky. says, *Education Week*, April 2, 1997.

Education Commission of the States (1998). *Designing and implementing standards-based accountability systems.* Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

Elmore, R., Ableman, C., & Fuhrman, S. (1996). The new accountability in state education reform: From process to performance. *Holding Schools Accountable.* Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

Finn, C., Manno, B. & Bierlein, L. (1996) *Charter Schools in Action: What Have We Learned?* Hudson Institute.

Ford, M. (1992). *Motivating humans.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Henry, G. (1996). Community accountability: A theory of information, accountability, and school improvement. *Phi Delta Kappan*, September.

Hill, P.T., Pierce, L.C., & Guthrie, J.W. (1997) *Reinventing Public Education.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kennedy, M. M. (1991). Implications for teaching. In E. A. Ramp & C. S. Pederson (Eds.), *Follow through: Program and policy issues* (57-71). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Education Research and Improvement.

Kirst, M. & Mazzeo, C. (1996). The rise, fall, and rise of state assessment in California, 1993-96. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 78, 319-323.

Kruse, S., Louis, K., & Bryk, A. (1995). An emerging framework for analyzing school-based professional community. In K. Seashore-Louis and S. Kruse (Eds.), *Professionalism and Community: Perspectives on Reforming Urban Schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Louis, K., Kruse, S., & Bryk, A. (1995). Professionalism and community: What is it and why is it important in urban schools? In K. S. Louis and S. Kruse (Eds.), *Professionalism and Community: Perspectives on Reforming Urban Schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Maryland Department of Education (1997). *Education reform in Maryland, 1977-1996*. Available on the Internet at http://www.mdk12.org/mspp/reform.

Mazmanian, D. & Sabatier, P. (1989). *Implementation and public policy*. Lantham: University Press of America.

Mezzacappa, D. (1998) A measure of success for Philadelphia schools, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 28, 1998.

Muncey, D., & McQuillan, P. (1996). *Reform and resistance in schools and classrooms: An ethnographic view of the coalition of essential schools*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

National Research Council (1998). *High Stakes: Testing for Tracking, Promotion and Graduation*.

NASBE Study Group on Education Governance (1996). *A Motion to Reconsider: Education Governance at a Crossroads*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Boards of Education.

NASBE Study Group on Funding Education in the 21st Century (1997a). *Financing Study Success: Beyond Equity and Adequacy*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Boards of Education.

NASBE Study Group on Statewide Assessment Systems (1997b). *The Full Measure*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Boards of Education.

Newmann, F., King, M., & Rigdon, (1997). Accountability and school performance: Implications for restructuring schools. *Harvard Educational Review*, 67, 41-74.

Newmann, F. & Wehlage, G. (1995). *Successful school restructuring*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools.

Olson, L. (1998). Distinguished educators train their focus on instruction, *Education Week*, April.

Rothman, R. (1995). *Measuring up: Standards, assessment and school reform*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Roach, V., Dailey, D., & Goertz, M. (1997). *State Accountability Systems and Students with Disabilities*. Center for Policy Research on the Impact of General and Special Education Reform. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Boards of Education.

Spillane, J. & Thompson, C. (1997). Reconstructing conceptions of local capacity: The local education agency's capacity for ambitious instructional reform. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 19, 185-203.

Steinberg, L. (1996). *Beyond the classroom*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

NASBE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION

The National Association of State Boards of Education is a nonprofit, private association that represents state and territorial boards of education. Our principal objectives are to strengthen state leadership in education policymaking; promote excellence in the education of all students; advocate equality of access to educational opportunity; and assure responsible lay governance of public education.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

X	This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.
	This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").